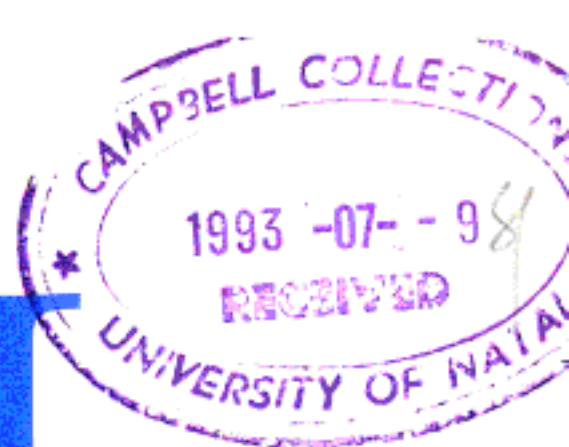


Volume 36 Number 1 May 1993



# SASH



C O N F E R E N C E 1 9 9 3

**PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY  
WORKING FOR PEACE IN WAR-TORN NATAL  
DEALING WITH THE LEGACY OF CORRUPTION  
"IT'S THE VOTE GAME" — DEMOCRACY IN ACTION**

*Conference took a decision that the dedication be preserved as it is in the archives of the Black Sash, rather than to amend it to suit current needs. Marie Dyer of Natal Midlands provided the following background to the dedication which placed it within its historical context.*

#### Notes on the Dedication

The Black Sash "dedication" was written by Alan Paton in the organisation's early years. Our (and his) pre-occupation at that time was with the destruction of the constitution by the Senate Act, which we all (rightly) saw as a total and shameless betrayal of crucially significant promises, undertakings, and conditions on which the 1910 Act of Union depended.

There was a sense that sacred trusts amounting to oaths had been broken, and it was this sense, rather than any specifically religious attitudes among members, that underlay the religious tone of the dedication. This was also the reason why concepts like "mutual trust" and "sanctity of word" were given more prominence in the wording than "peace" and "justice".

The original dedication contained a specific reference to the Act of Union: The second sentence began, "We pledge ourselves to uphold the ideals by which our Union was inspired, of mutual trust . . ." The reference to union was dropped in 1963, presumably because of the government's final repudiation of the Act of Union by the institution of the republic in 1961 – but also, I suppose, by the realisation that the ideals which had inspired it were not uniformly admirable.

The vision statement adopted at the 1993 national conference supersedes the dedication which, it was decided, should be preserved in both versions as a valuable document of Black Sash history but should no longer be part of our meetings and activities. □

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# SASH

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Cover: "Thistledown", Peter E. Clarke, undated linocut

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All political comment in this issue, except where otherwise stated, is by Candy Malherbe and birga thomas, 5 Long Street, 7700 Mowbray.

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# Editorial

Natal curry and women's poetry, madrigal singers and home-made pies added spice and flavour to the 1993 national conference. Efficient preparation and management made it the success it was. The working sessions and informal meetings on issues ranging from public policy to historic texts enshrining Black Sash ethos and goals prepared the ground for our future work. Delegates and observers shared a sense of achievement at the end: "It feels as if we have been wriggling our toes in the sand, and finally we have found a firm footing," one regional chair remarked.

Conference started with reflections on the tasks of 1992. For all the diversity which the regional reports to conference lay bare, the toughest questions tend to surface simultaneously in all regions. Black Sash advice offices now deal, above all, with destitution - "people who are desperate to lay their hands on money in order to survive". What advice can our offices give? What should the Black Sash lobby government to do? A February workshop on the government budget prepared the way for a realistic appraisal of options by conference. Two articles, by Marj Brown and Francie Lund, expand on this topic.

Effective lobbying (or "advocacy") was recognised as a Black Sash priority, not only to achieve a better social welfare system but also to bring pressure to bear on parliament and a constituent assembly where human rights are concerned. This consensus is reflected in the participation in the Women's Advocacy Education Pilot Project by Thisbe Clegg, and in the unanimous acceptance of a proposal which may lead to the employment of a parliamentary monitor and lobbying co-ordinator.

An urgent need for voter education was expressed by all the regions, and many of the informal discussions centred on this topic. Information booklets, workshops, ingenious means of engaging advice office queues, and a Pretoria street blitz are some of the ways in which this challenge is being met. Members are monitoring the pre-election process and some will serve as accredited observers when South Africa's first democratic elections are finally held. Delegates were acutely aware that the process is threatened by the violence-which-has-no-end, a factor of chilling relevance for Natal Midlands who hosted conference this year.

During 1992, Black Sash management systems received a thorough analysis at the hands of the "Viljoen Commission". The full report, a model of clarity, can only be briefly summarised in this issue of SASH, and is available in regional offices.

Attention to the nuts and bolts of management was matched by a careful evaluation of our dedication which is now replaced by the new vision statement. In her presidential address, Jenny de Tolly explained: "Drawing on our proud tradition, and looking to the future, we hope to adopt a vision statement that will capture the ideals that drive us, and aims and objectives that will focus our work." The new statement, framed by the national executive in consultation with the regions, was adopted by conference and may be found on the back cover of SASH.

Our front cover's linocut by Peter E. Clarke reflects the future-orientated spirit of national conference 1993. Once again conference proved a unifying event from which regional representatives carry back a wealth of information and resolve. In a special sense, this conference was a pivotal one, connecting past and future, old and new. Clarke's thistledown and our fresh vision will, we trust, bear fruit.

Candy Malherbe birga thomas

# Turning the tide: Dealing with the legacy of corruption

*Jenny de Tolly's three years as Black Sash president have coincided with the gestation – but not yet the birth – of the “new South Africa”. Her third presidential address to a national conference takes a feisty look at the impressive mess that the powers-that-be have wrought, and suggests steps towards a new ethical society.*

Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain declared that 1992 had been “annus horribilis” – a year she would not look on with undiluted pleasure. For somewhat different reasons than those besetting the royal family, most South Africans agreed that the past year has indeed been “annus horribilis” for them too. The nation has been decidedly pessimistic and gloomy. There were moments which seemed to infuse enthusiasm and hope such as the “yes” vote in the white referendum in March, the resumption of negotiations at Codesa 2, and Elana Meyer’s success at the Olympics. But the gloom has persisted.

There were a number of reasons for our despair: the breakdown in political negotiations, the continuing political and criminal violence, the poor state of the economy and escalating unemployment, the rise of economic crime and runaway corruption, and the decline of public ethics. No wonder we were depressed. I would like to touch briefly on some of these issues, but also to look at some of the remedies.

## Negotiations

The March 1992 referendum was a boost for F. W. de Klerk, and for a negotiated settlement. To quote the post-referendum *Weekly Mail*: “Pinch yourself South Africa: democracy is coming within months. The overwhelming mandate white voters gave to the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) has removed the last major obstacle to the dismantling of white minority rule.” But by mid-May it became clear that the African National Congress (ANC) and the government had been advancing toward very different goals. The ANC was negotiating a transition to majority rule; the National Party (NP) was trying to prevent it. Codesa 2 collapsed.

For the next nine months formal multi-party negotiations were abandoned. In that period much political jockeying occurred, as the various parties sought to gain the upper hand and increase their support base.

The nation waited anxiously, increasingly frustrated and angry, as hopes of a peaceful settlement seemed to fade. Bilateral negotiations, particularly between the government and the



ANC, have continued, despite numerous incidents bound to derail these talks. The economy continued to go deeper into recession, and acts of political violence further fuelled uncertainty and fear. It became clear that if this process and the economy were to be rescued, there was no time to waste. These are some of the factors that have convinced parties to go back to the negotiating table. Today (1 April 1993) multi-party negotiations will resume with 25 parties participating, this time including the right-wing Conservative Party and the left-wing Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC).

Though some substantial differences remain and many of the details still have to be negotiated, what is on the cards is a Transitional Executive Council which should be in place relatively soon. A date will be set for national elections, likely to be in the first quarter of 1994. The ANC and the government seem to be reaching agreement on a government of "national unity" – a softer term for power-sharing, but not the sort envisaged by the NP. The system of proportional representation, with a threshold of 5 per cent to gain admittance of party representatives to the cabinet, will ensure that the government consists of several parties. This could mean (according to recent polls) 13 or 14 ANC ministers, 4 or 5 NP, two PAC and one each for the Conservative Party and Inkatha Freedom Party. These proportions would be reflected in the constituent assembly. Apparently the ANC put forward these proposals after it had carefully analysed the balance of forces and seen that there were certain realities that it could not ignore. For instance, would it be able to govern a country with a defence force and a police force that owed it no allegiance? Similarly with the business community and the whites – the ANC estimates that it would only win 10 per cent of the white vote. Reality thus forced the ANC to accept that there had to be a "joint national effort" for at least five years to arrest the crisis in the country and to turn things around.

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*"... we must be vigilant, power politics is no substitute for democratic practice. A government of national unity, while it does have the advantage of including a number of parties, essentially lacks an opposition of any significance. A weak opposition can result in politicians with unfettered power."*

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There is a spirit of cautious optimism now. It is amazing how circumstances have changed in the past year. The lack of accountability to the broader public of Codesa 2 was a cause of great

concern to us at that time. Today a reasonable negotiated settlement that will bring some peace and stability, even if it is brokered in private essentially by two parties, seems like manna from heaven. But we must be vigilant, power politics is no substitute for democratic practice. A government of national unity, while it does have the advantage of including a number of parties, essentially lacks an opposition of any significance. A weak opposition can result in politicians with unfettered power. Highly undesirable.

## **Violence**

Violence, both political and criminal, has continued to erupt and people continue to die. There are numbing statistics that indicate what a brutal society we are. Last year 283 140 people were assaulted – that is one in every 70 South Africans. And 20 135 people were murdered – which is one in every 1 000. That makes our land the "murder centre of the world".

Meeting here in Pietermaritzburg brings home to us the harsh realities of a province that has been at war for several years. People continue to be murdered and communities destroyed in appalling acts of politically-instigated violence, which are the highest in the country.

Bringing violence under control is crucial, and very determined efforts are being made. The Peace Accord structures at last are becoming effective. Working alongside these structures, since July, have been international monitors from the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity, the European Community and the Commonwealth as well as local monitors from Peace Action and the Network of Independent Monitors.

Purging the police, the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the armies of the liberation movements of those who are not committed to peace, and retraining those who remain is a longer-term and more complex task.

Encouraging signs are the recent statistics which show a decline of political violence in the Transvaal: large-scale massacres and attacks mounted from township hostels have decreased, and train attacks, the hallmark of the "third force" behind the violence, appear to have come to an end. There also appear to be promising peace initiatives in Natal – did the slaughtering of six children on their way to school finally bring people to their senses?

## **Economic crime and corruption**

South Africa is said to be experiencing the worst economic recession in more than 80 years.

We are also in the grip of an economic crime wave. It has become evident that the scale of corruption, fraud, and financial mismanagement is vast and involves all sectors of our society from governments to the private sector and also non-governmental organisations. The country is being cheated to death as it strives to forge a post-apartheid society.

What is also worrying is the warning that the Mafia and organised-crime syndicates are moving into South Africa. There is already talk that the Hong Kong triads are distributing drugs in Cape Town, and have contacts at every level of our society. We tend to be so obsessed with our political problems that we ignore another cancer that could well corrupt and bankrupt the nation, if not checked as fast as possible.

We are not alone in our problems with corruption. The *Guardian* points out that "from Europe to the Far East, we can look onto a positive panorama of corruption, with the money politics of Japan and Italy, the help yourself corruption of deregulated Northern Europe, and the looting of public assets in the former soviet states".

Recent figures estimate that private-sector fraud alone over the past eight years has stripped this country of some R350 billion – the equivalent of the value of this country's entire production of goods and services last year. Some major financial scams, such as the collapse of Masterbond groups, the Cape Investment Bank, Supreme Holdings and the Fundtrust financial group have been investigated, but there are said to be many more cases of fraud that are yet to come to light.

Stealing money is not new. Ten years ago Denis Etheridge, a former director of Anglo American, warned that "corruption was rampant among South African businessmen". There has been a substantial increase in reported fraud complaints – from 33 101 in 1986 to 58 572 in 1992 – an increase of 77 per cent in that seven-year period. These figures do not tell the full story, as many economic crimes remain undetected or unreported.

Non-governmental organisations have not escaped the rot. Two senior officials in the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Repatriation of South African Exiles (NCCR) were recently fired on suspicion of fraud, and officials of Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU) in the Western Cape were dismissed because of attempted fraud.

Corruption in all levels of government also appears to be rampant. In recent months there have been official investigations into "irregularities" committed by officials of the Johannesburg and Pretoria city councils, councillors in the Vaal Triangle, Baragwanath and Groote Schuur hospitals, Midrand Council officials, Deeds Office officials in Cape Town – the list is endless.

"Official" fraud has been disclosed through reports of the auditor-general or special commissions. Over the past two years there have been investigations into allegations of theft, bribery and fraud involving the departments of health, finance, education and training, correctional services, foreign affairs, justice, customs and excise, transport, the former department of development aid, Armscor and the SADF including huge payments to members of the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB). In his latest report (for 1991, released 22 February 1993), the auditor-general disclosed that:

- The state-operated third-party accident fund (the Multilateral Motor Vehicle Accidents Fund), which is administered by the department of transport, is now R3 billion in the red because of bad administration and fraudulent practices. Attorneys, insurance assessors,



Economists are saying that our Gross Domestic Product is now equal to our Gross Corruption Product.

and a policeman have so far been arrested. The Fund's income is provided by the special fuel levy which is incorporated into the petrol and diesel prices. The price of these fuels has been raised in the latest budget.

- Further investigations are underway in the department of transport for the alleged bribery of transport officials, corruption and theft at Jan Smuts Airport, large-scale squandering of moneys and improper allocation of state subsidies to a transport company. R35 million in compensation was paid to the Bophuthatswana Transport Holdings when its buses were idle during a ten-month boycott. There are allegations that certain department officials are on the board of a parent company, Bophuthatswana Transport Investments. Concern was also expressed in a preliminary report that the department seems to own huge amounts of property – after expropriation of farms for building roads – but no assets register has been found.
- The homelands are in a financial mess, and they are unlikely ever to be able to repay their debts which are guaranteed by the South African government. This means of course that the taxpayer will have to carry the burden. The "independent" homelands of Transkei, Ciskei and Venda owe R3,3 billion in loans and overdraft facilities and the six non-independent homelands have debts and overdraft facilities of R478,7 million.

The financial mismanagement in the homelands includes the inability to keep within financial guidelines, overspending on salaries (officials are paid on an equal basis with their counterparts in S.A., for example, the commissioner of police in Lebowa enjoys the same rank and pay as S.A.'s commissioner of police and the chief of the

SADF), and spending on buildings which are not used, such as three police stations in KwaZulu which cost R1,5 million each and six primary schools and a high school which cost R2 million.

There are allegations of widespread corruption in three Transkei parastatals, the Transkei Road Transport Corporation (TRTC), the Transkei Broadcasting Corporation, and the Transkei Development Corporation. TRTC general manager, Michael Hoskin, was attacked and shot by TRTC guards after he had made allegations about corruption in the corporation.

Former auditor-general Peter Wronsley had on several occasions criticised the reluctance of the government to act more forcefully and had proposed fiscal action to enforce order in the homelands, saying, "The failure to adopt these proposals has undoubtedly contributed to the undisciplined conduct of the recipients of aid."

In response to the recent disclosures, De Klerk said that legal action would be taken against wrongdoers. He said that simultaneous disclosures of corruption in more than one department were "disconcerting", but the way that the government was handling the issue should instil confidence in the international community. That is just not good enough, and is symptomatic of a government that has been in power for too long – of an administration in decay.

### Corruption of ethics

It is common at times of uncertainty, that those who have the opportunity will take what they can while they can, and very often run and disappear with it. Apart from the outright theft, there is concern at the amount of state money allocated to perks and payouts to those in government. There are sizeable redundancy or early retirement packages for civil servants, particularly the senior ones. There are the housing and car perks and

burden that these debts will place on them. Unless there is a huge burst of economic growth, we will be bankrupting future generations.

But financial corruption is only a symptom of a much larger problem. We need to examine the system of laws and the form of government that we have lived under in the recent past to understand the roots of our problem.

The inescapable truth is that grand apartheid was a scam that enriched the few while impoverishing the majority. It pandered to the greed of those who were white and created laws to ensure their privilege. It set up a system of schooling that ensured that some people got better schooling than others at three times the cost. It hounded innocent people who had come to the cities to seek work because they did not have a "dompas" allowing them to be there, and put them into gaol if they couldn't pay the fine. It removed 3,5 million people from the places where they were living for no other reason than that they were black. How can a nation countenance such actions and not suffer a breakdown of ethics and conscience? To quote Phillip van Niekerk of the *Weekly Mail*: "Why should a man like former justice minister Jimmy Kruger, who was left cold by the murder of Steve Biko at the hands of his own security police, give a damn about straight dealing in business?"

There are two other aspects to the system under which we have lived that have countenanced practices which we are paying for and will have a hard time eradicating.

One of the objectives of the National Party when it came to power was to lift white Afrikaners from their impoverished state through a policy of "affirmative action". Positions at all levels of government service were filled by Afrikaners, those at the upper levels by Broederbonders. Big government contracts were mostly given to the faithful and funds of government departments were invested in Afrikaner-controlled financial institutions. Political patronage and nepotism such as this is not conducive to fair practice and provides fertile ground for financial corruption. In the future, South Africa should embark on a programme of affirmative action aimed at achieving equality for those who have been disadvantaged by apartheid. I believe that it is important that affirmative-action programmes are not based on political patronage, and that they are ended once they have achieved their stated goals. Discrimination is a practice we have long fought.

The second, and more dangerous, practice, which reached its heights under the notion of the "total onslaught", was the culture of secrecy. Tens of billions of rands were set aside in secret funds. They paid for a huge arms industry – which De Klerk has now revealed included R8 billions worth of nuclear bombs. They also paid for a large army bent on the destruction of the liberation movements. Under the veil of secrecy the most appalling acts of destabilisation, torture, murder,

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*"The inescapable truth is that grand apartheid was a scam that enriched the few while impoverishing the majority. It pandered to the greed of those who were white and created laws to ensure their privilege ... How can a nation countenance such actions and not suffer a breakdown of ethics and conscience?"*

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pension schemes for the myriad politicians who will not make it in a democratic election. For example, Magnus Malan's retirement package amounted to R400 000, tax-free, plus R16 000 and other benefits each month. The hands of future governments are being tied because of the



and disinformation were carried out by elements in the security forces. The truth is slowly emerging of the dirty tricks by hit squads, notably a unit called "Hammer". It reveals the corruption of human beings at their worst. How can a state countenance these actions and not suffer a breakdown of ethics and conscience?

### Towards a new ethical society

Someone recently said to me that corruption cannot be stopped, it can at best be minimised. Given the pervasiveness of corruption in our society that might well be realistic, but I refuse to begin from that premise. What then can be done to purge corruption, particularly in government? Here are some suggestions:

- 1 Ethical values and practices must be promoted within the broad public, and the perception that crime pays must be rooted out. Public servants, like all citizens, should understand their responsibilities, and be required to abide by a code of conduct.
- 2 Respect for law must be restored. This is a question of putting in place laws that are just and relevant and a reflection of societal values. Laws must also be able to be enforced. This requires having adequate investigative and enforcement capability within the justice system. It is totally unacceptable that those who are found guilty of crimes or malpractice should be allowed to continue to be employed or hold office within any level of government.
- 3 Government should be open and accountable to the general public. Freedom of information laws are needed to allow residents to approach government for the information it is holding on any issue, person, or organisation. Unless the information falls into an exempt category (like national security) the government is required to supply it. An open government honours its duty to give reasons for administrative actions.
- 4 Political answerability and accountability of public representatives and cabinet appointees must be restored. A cabinet minister should resign if serious corruption or inefficiency is found to have occurred in his/her department. It makes no difference whether s/he knew about it or not. There have been several scandals in recent years, but no cabinet minister since Connie Mulder has resigned because of it.
- 5 There should be a vigorous and assertive ombudsbody with adequate powers, budget, and offices around the country.
- 6 Legislators and civil servants should be required to declare their assets and their sources of income, including the identity of companies for whom they act as consultants.
- 7 Finally, the most important brake on excesses and abuses in society is the general public and the institutions that form civil society, such as voluntary organisations, neighbourhood groups, citizens' initiatives, development in-

stitutions, non-governmental organisations and those groupings who contribute toward the strengthening of a variety of democratic practices, values and traditions in society. The Black Sash is a part of that civil society, and every member has a role to play.

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*"... the most important brake on excesses and abuses in society is the general public and the institutions that form civil society ... The Black Sash is a part of that civil society, and every member has a role to play."*

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### Role of the Black Sash

I am surprised when people ask me whether there is still a role for the Black Sash. It would be wonderful to believe that we could now disband because transformation of the South African society has been achieved. We all know that, despite the many changes that have taken place, this is not true. The past three years have shown us that it is going to be a longer, tougher process than we had naïvely hoped in early 1990.

The challenge that we face as an organisation today is to adapt to the changes and demands of the 1990s. This we have been trying to do over the past couple of years, but it is at this conference that some of this work will come to fruition. Drawing on our proud tradition, and looking to the future, we hope to adopt a vision statement that will capture the ideals that drive us, and aims and objectives that will focus our work.

When our film, "The Black Sash: The Early Years" was chosen from several hundreds to be shown at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in New York last May, I was thrilled but surprised. I wondered why the story of this group of women should have been chosen alongside ones on torture in Guatemala, and the disappeared of Argentina. Then I realised that it is because six women each phoned six women who each phoned six other women, and got a movement going that was about defending what was right and condemning what was wrong. And that is what all societies need, and precisely what our country needs too.

We have earned respect for standing up and making our voices heard about the excesses and injustices happening in South Africa over the past thirty-seven years. Our voice must continue to be heard. □

# Addressing the "cracks"

*Black Sash advice offices and their clients confront the "cracks" in the welfare system every day. Intensive pre-conference preparation to clarify the issues enabled delegates to plan constructively for change. National researcher Marj Brown reports.*

**B**lack Sash advice offices (AOs) have seen the face of marginalised people for decades. We have witnessed the increasing despair of clients. The majority seek any way of receiving a little money on which to survive, be it a disability grant (DG), an old-age pension (OAP), a private pension, workmen's compensation (WCA), or an Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) payment. A few lucky ones have a small sum owing to them, or qualify for assistance on the basis of disability or old age. For most there is no safety net. When the paltry sums due them from UIF or WCA dry up, there is nothing. The youth, most of whom have never worked, do not qualify for welfare of any kind. The Johannesburg AO report reveals the cracks – chasms – in our welfare system.

A workshop in Cape Town on 27/28 February 1993 aimed at laying the groundwork for a Black Sash welfare policy. It focused particularly on the ideas of public-works programmes and of social assistance (formerly, "dole") for those over 50 years old who are unemployed. What should we lobby for in terms of state welfare spending? How can people's dignity be upheld?

## Workshopping the budget

To enhance our understanding of the affordability of changes to the welfare budget, André Roux, an economist at the University of the Western Cape, conducted an exercise on budget planning. He began by comparing allocations under the current



Marj Brown

budget to those of other countries. There were some surprises: our education budget, at 6,6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is high compared with other middle-income countries. Teachers' salaries (also relatively high!) will, in real terms, decrease in future.

Savings on the "protection function" – defence, police, prisons – cannot be assumed. Cuts in defence spending (from, say, 3,7 per cent to 2,5 per cent of GDP) may well be possible. On the other hand, stabilising the townships could require shifting these savings to the police, rather than to social services.

Roux involved us in planning for the next five years, based on low-growth and high-growth scenarios. Economic growth makes all the difference, as these comparisons made clear. To see the growth rate rise we need political stability and confidence, the implementation of a set of workable economic policies (for example, trade policies), and the resolution of issues between trade unions and employers – a prerequisite for higher productivity.

Roux's low-growth scenario assumes a 10 per cent inflation rate and no lasting improvement in GDP. With no change in real spending, that is, no increase even to match population growth, the debt will grow – and, also, the interest payments on this debt. As present debt is fairly low, there is some room to accumulate debt, but this trend could not be sustained much beyond 1997/98. The high-growth scenario assumes a gradual rise (to 4 per cent) in GDP.

The budget is the main instrument of redistribution in the economy. Transfers can lift an economy for a short time, but real growth is the key. Resources for redistribution must be found within the budget, and it is crucial to monitor the debt level at every stage. With this in mind, we looked at:

- *Housing.* The present backlog of 1,2 million houses increases at the rate of 200 000 per annum – in urban areas alone. To provide formal housing, over five years, we would have to build 400 000 houses each year. This would cost R20 billion per annum –

and rocket our debt level. Site-and-service schemes at R10 000 per site (R5 billion per annum) are feasible.

- **Health.** Expenditure is reasonable, yet our indicators (infant mortality, life expectancy) remain poor. By World Health Organisation standards, we need 1 300 clinics (1:10 000 people). To build 300 per annum, over five years, would cost R150 000 per clinic plus R500 000 in maintenance each year. Community health centres (1:50 000 people) are more cost-effective.

The question of AIDS was not addressed. Nor was the cost of clean water and sanitation, both essential to holistic primary health care (PHC). It was, however, pointed out that addressing PHC needs in the short term does not ensure decreased health spending in the long term. PHC means increased life expectancy, and more older people means more health care.

- **Employment programmes and social assistance.** An employment or public works scheme targeted at half a million of the neediest people, which assumes a monthly wage of R300, would push the debt to 56 per cent of GDP – an acceptable level. Social assistance, also set at R300 per month to benefit 2 million people would push the debt to the unacceptable level of 71 per cent of GDP.

### Public-works programmes

A paper (“Why a labour-based national public-works programme for South Africa?”) by University of Cape Town economist Iraj Abedian provides a good introduction to this subject. His points, briefly summarised, were:

- Economic growth “is a necessary but not a sufficient condition” to alleviate the plight of the impoverished and unemployed, as long as most are illiterate and unskilled and the capital-intensive formal economy relies on skills. Also, the capacity of the informal sector to absorb these marginalised people is overrated. This sector is not an independent entity but depends on the vitality of the formal economy. For example, the services sector is dependent on income generation by production.
- The alternative is a direct, targeted labour-based approach. Fiscal policy must have development at the centre, and a national public-works

programme (NPWP) which targets the poor in an enabling way must be introduced. This approach stimulates the economy without the risk of inflation, and has the highest multiplier effect on the economy. If R2 billion were made available, this would be sufficient to kick-start such a scheme. One must be prepared for the NPWP to continue for up to 25 years.

- Certain pitfalls must be avoided: insufficient scale vis-à-vis the needs of the economy; technical hastiness and incompetence; imbalance between central and local involvement in planning and implementation; and others, such as

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*“... it is vital to include communities – with all their opposing forces and tensions – in planning, organising, and monitoring public-works programmes ...”*

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“ad hoc-ism”. With regard to local involvement, Abedian stressed that it is vital to include communities – with all their opposing forces and tensions – in planning, organising, and monitoring public-works programmes (PWPs). Tensions may be to the advantage of the project, as people police each other.

Pieter le Roux, director of the Institute for Social Development at the University of the Western Cape, attended the workshop and had some warnings with regard to PWPs:

- It takes time to build management skills and, in the interim, projects collapse.
- They are difficult to monitor, and open to corruption.

- They can undermine the formal sector, putting more people out of work. Diversion of funds, at the expense of the formal sector, can inhibit economic growth.

- Prioritising projects and needs can be difficult, for example, development which attracts tourists and foreign exchange versus the production of basic necessities.

- Skills training is often expensive. What is learned may be basic “life skills” and work discipline, such as punctuality. These are important and should not be undervalued.

On the plus side, Le Roux pointed out that PWPs target the very poor, who “select themselves” when wages are set at a low rate. They also present an alternative to despair and frustration and thus may be an antidote to crime and violence.

### Cosatu and PWPs

Cosatu’s Adrian Sayers outlined his organisation’s approach to PWPs, as given shape at an economic conference in 1992. The Drought Relief Forum, he said, has also created a place to discuss the numerous factors – state financing, wage rates, project management, possible displacement of the formal-sector workforce – which are at stake.

A breakthrough on pilot PWPs came in the construction industry. Cosatu was approached by engineering consultants, requesting support for an application to the department of manpower for a wage exemption on which to base a labour-intensive scheme for building infrastructure – roads, drainage – in Khayelitsha. This set off a lot of debate. On 24 February 1993, an agreement involving the relevant players was struck.

Cosatu suggests the following criteria for PWPs:

- The community must benefit. Skills training (literacy, numeracy, technical skills) should be built in. Proficiency must be recognised by the respective industry boards.
- Communities must be consulted, from the beginning to the completion of a project. The community structures which negotiate need to be truly representative, and should serve on – if necessary, be trained to serve on – project management structures.
- Employment policies must be fair and take into account issues such as gender, youth, and period unemployed.

- Concessions with regard to the minimum wage need to be job-specific rather than open-ended, to be negotiated by affected communities, and to be carefully monitored with provision for the punishment of infringements.

The National Economic Forum (NEF) has collected ideas from a wide range of organisations for a PWP, which will be presented shortly in a report. A problem for Cosatu is that PWPs are short-term, thus there is a need to look at placing people coming out of them in employment. Other requirements are:

- accurate statistics of joblessness, to assess needs;
- freezing the sale of public land;
- concrete proposals for PWPs;
- regional and urban planning, so that infrastructure is not created in an *ad hoc* fashion.

According to Lisa Seftel of Cosatu, the organisation is pushing the state to grant R2,5 million to investigate and set up pilot PWPs with the essentials (training, budget, technical advice) in place.

### Black Sash response

It appears likely that Cosatu-style PWPs will be urban-based. To assist rural areas, where the need is great, special employment projects (SEPs) which are smaller and more quickly set up may be more suitable. It was suggested that the Black Sash promote a pilot project based in, say, Grahamstown – a small area, with relatively little violence, where civic or other grassroots structures are in place. The SEP could target mothers or caretakers of children currently getting, or who should be getting, food aid. Albany region agreed to investigate.

It was also felt that the Black Sash can play an important monitoring role with respect to both SEPs and PWPs.

### Welfare grants or social assistance?

Pieter le Roux felt that the Black Sash should push for both welfare and development. He addressed these issues in the light of the four priorities for South Africa set by the Mont Fleur Scenario team. These are: public health and nutrition; education and training; decreasing the violence; and empowering women.

Cape Eastern AO researcher,

Lynne Teixeira, then discussed the options with regard to UIF. She pointed out that it is run as an insurance fund, not a state welfare programme. At present, the worker gets 45 per cent of the last wage received, for a period of six months. For payments to be increased, worker and employer contributions would have to be increased too (it is 0,9 per cent of salary at present).

Possibly, the Black Sash should lobby for UIF to be paid out for longer than six months. Certainly we should insist that the rule that one must claim within six months should be revoked. Many workers do not know this, thus they try to survive on private resources at first, only to find out too late that they have lost their chance to claim what is rightfully theirs: the UIF consists in part of their own contributions.

The right to extended benefits needs to be publicised. The department of manpower does not even mention these in its brochures. Companies should be monitored to see if they are registering employees. Failure to do so leads to a delay in payments. Domestic workers need to be brought into UIF. Teixeira will explore re-introducing the stamp system (flat-rate UIF) for farm and domestic workers.

This is in the context of a now-bankrupt fund. What is the future of the UIF? The state used to contribute 50 per cent. Then it froze its input at R7 million – as there was so much money in the fund at the time!

Because a social-assistance system seems financially impossible at present, Teixeira was asked to explore the possibility of extending UIF to those who lose their jobs after turning 50 – when they have little chance of being re-employed. She will try to estimate the numbers of those aged 50 and above, who have lost their jobs, as well as those turning 50 who

have been out of work from an earlier age.

### Nutrition and food aid

Penny Geerds of the East London AO described the complexity of the 10-page form confronting applicants for food aid – the guidelines are 60 pages long! It requires a detailed budget and a community profile – for example, information with regard to the number of families in need. Organisations must have a constitution (that is, be legally constituted) and present a long-term development plan. A soup kitchen, for example, will very likely have to apply through the local civic. A substantial portion of the allocated funds has gone to bodies which are

Mother and child waiting to attend a mobile clinic in Daggakraal, Eastern Transvaal



part of government themselves. It is noteworthy as well that this fund inflates the health budget, instead of going to welfare where it belongs.

The Black Sash intends to collect information regionally as to how this money is being used and lobby for it to be directed to SEPs and to collective feeding schemes. We will also lobby for officials to help with the filling-in of forms. The problem of handing out food with no developmental follow-up was acknowledged and our organisation will tread warily around the politics of food aid.

### Pensions and grants

The advantage of old-age pensions is that they generally reach the target

directly – having a relatively good delivery system in place. Pensions, therefore, have an immediate impact on large numbers of people including other family members. According to Francie Lund, a recent survey by University of Natal (Durban) showed that 70 per cent of black families have access to an old-age pensioner.

The problem is that state pensions will place an intolerable burden on the economy as parity is reached and as the present black population ages. It is likely that state pensions will decrease in real terms in the future. It is therefore important to set up other “safety nets” for those currently subsidised by family pensioners.

Already, cuts have been seen in other forms of state grant. Criteria for receiving disability grants (DGs) have been tightened. Of 22 state workshops providing sheltered employment, 16 cater for whites, 11 for coloured people, and two for blacks. Only 22 000 jobs were available in 1992, while 12,7 per cent of our population is disabled. The Black Sash should push for the abolition of means tests for DGs,

and for assessment criteria to take account of the relative chances of applicants' finding employment. The fact that a WCA recipient is disqualified from receiving a DG, which may offer a greater amount, needs to be exposed – as does the problem of losing work due to disability and therefore not qualifying for UIF, yet not being disabled enough to qualify for a DG.

### Health

Hilary Southall reported on the state of the health system and on future needs. Our poor-health indicators (water, sanitation, nutrition, housing) reflect poor socio-economic conditions, thus she recommends a primary health care “package” which includes all of these. (Providing a health package over the next five years is an excellent PWP.) Mothers need to be educated about nutrition and sanitation. It is not realistic to increase the health budget, however. The money should rather be used more sensibly.

AIDS thrives in poor conditions. We need to lobby for AIDS victims to be kept at work as long as possible and then receive DGs. Advice offices should be vigilant with regard to the provisions of insurance packages and medical aid schemes where AIDS sufferers are concerned. They can offer education in health care and AIDS to people in their waiting rooms.

### The state's role

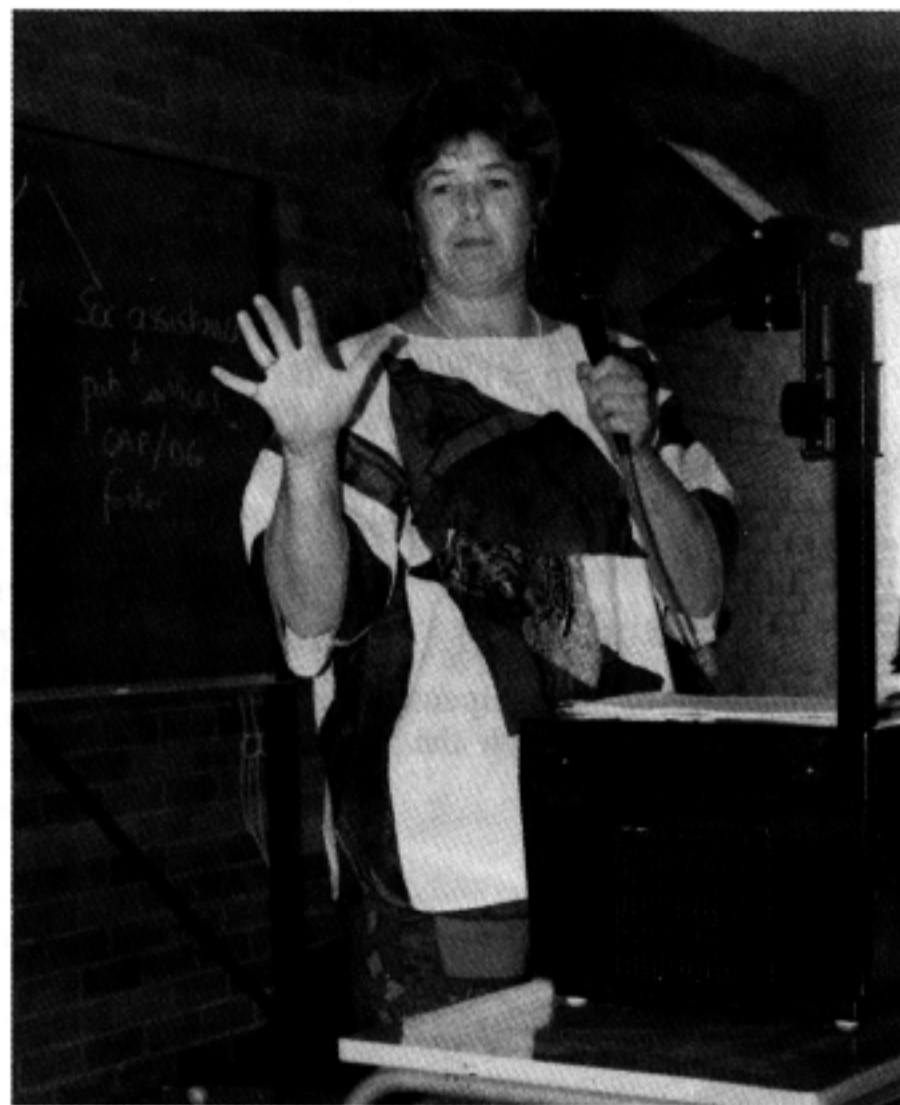
There are grounds for hope in the new directions which are available in welfare, but much depends on:

- the state's vision of development as an important part of welfare, and of reworking its fiscal policy accordingly;
- the state's acknowledgment that it has a responsibility to all the indigent people in South Africa. It cannot expect families to support each other when unemployment is so high, and when apartheid has divided families as it has;
- the state's addressing of the “cracks” in its own systems, as identified above.

The Black Sash's task is to lobby for change, to monitor the administration of all forms of welfare, and to ensure that the most marginalised are targeted. □



## Called to account



Francie Lund

**Francie Lund** argues for the interrelatedness of social and economic policy, of welfare and development, in a social security system which will be able to provide "pathways out of poverty".

One goal of a budget of reconstruction will be to address past inequities and skewed allocation of resources. An understanding of how to do this must rest on an understanding of the definitions and assumptions used by society as a whole, and especially by those who draw up budgets, about the relationship between social and economic policy. If we continue to see economic and social policy as two separate things, we have not got a hope of coming up with policies which will help the presently poor, and which will also be good for women. In order to demonstrate this, I am going to talk about two sets of assumptions in particular: first, assumptions underlying household allocation of resources and responsibilities, and second, assumptions about welfare and development at a more macro level.

Before this, however, there are some broad and rather obvious points which I want to make. First, social and economic policies, of which budgets are an outcome, are based on some theory of the world – how relationships and institutions are presently structured. They reinforce valued aspects of the present, or they say what kind of

future is desired, and sometimes they allow in completely new categories in response to a newly perceived need. To take examples from the field of health, they could reinforce the present pattern by saying "we will continue to allocate about a twentieth of the health budget to primary health care services"; or they could shift the balance to other forms of provision: "this year we will increase the allocation to primary health care to half of the overall health budget". Or they could introduce something new: "we will now embark on a five-year plan for a budget for AIDS prevention within the primary-health care budget".

Second, policy-making and the resulting budgeting process include decisions not only about what should be allocated, but also about who should provide the services, and how. Many policy debates are clouded by confusion about the different roles the state can play, the polarisation between "the state versus the market" and "government versus the voluntary welfare sector". This misses the point of *the relationship between*

different potential providers. In welfare, health and education, for example, a government can

- provide a direct service (build and maintain and staff an institution for severely disabled people) or
- subsidise someone else (a welfare organisation) to do the same or
- make a set of regulations about the provision of institutions for severely disabled people, and leave it to "the market" to provide.

Throughout the paper, I will be referring to links and relationships between things, rather than keeping things separate with either/ors. The state/the market; welfare/development; growth/redistribution; production/consumption are examples of places where we polarise, rather than look at relationships between.

Now, to return to the first of the topics I mentioned earlier, I want to address the interdependence of social and economic policy by looking at the assumptions underlying household allocation of resources and responsibilities.

### Social and economic policy

We can understand this interdependence by looking at the radical overhaul going on in the United Kingdom's social security system (and indeed in the rest of Europe) at the moment.

Lord William Beveridge, the prime architect of the United Kingdom's welfare-state policy, based his model on the following assumptions (which, even in 1942, only partly reflected the real world). He assumed that people would be living in two-generational nuclear families, with a male head of household; that there would be full employment in the formal waged economy; that the male head of household would be in employment, and women would be at home. The report was written "as if" these things were all true.

In the fifty years since then, there have been major socio-economic changes. There are far more elderly people, who are living far longer; there is a significant increase in lone parenting; more men are out of formal waged employment, for longer periods; more women are in formal employment, but going back later in life to lower-level, deregulated jobs with flexible hours.

The social security system is therefore built on a model that has to be revised.

In South Africa, the endless stream of "new" welfare policy documents which have emanated from our own Department of National Health and Population Development has the same sort of central problem – dealing with an "as if" world, but more seriously even, dealing with the world "as we would like it to be". The underlying motivation is to get more women to volunteer to provide welfare services at community level for free, because of cutbacks in government spending.

This is motivated by presenting a nostalgic organising myth which goes something like: women are at home, with lots of free time, and with altruism in their bosom; they have only to see a person in pain in the community to be able to galvanise a spirit of solidarity, and get the school system, the church, and the local authority to swing into action to help this fellow citizen.

Could anything be more out of touch with the reality of how most South Africans live? It takes no account of the increasing number of households headed by women, of the high rates of unemployment, of the numbers of women who work out of the home, of the chaotic school systems, of the lack of legitimacy of local government. It bases itself on an "as if" world; so it cannot address the problems of our world "as it is".

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*"The underlying motivation [of the endless stream of 'new' policy documents] is to get more women to volunteer to provide welfare services at community level for free, because of cutbacks in government spending."*

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To get from "as if" to "as it is" requires good information, contemporary research which informs the policy-making process. In the United Kingdom, the debates about more appropriate social policies are being informed by the rich research activity about how gender, household decision-making, and the labour market interact with each other to throw up different patterns of informal care in the household. The key question which drives this research is: what are the effects of economic change on unpaid work done within (and more recently between) households? The point of departure is that a great deal of society's health and welfare needs is seen to in the "informal sector" – in households, mostly by women.

The research demonstrates the rich irony involved in the new and shifting relationship between what is private and what is public. A woman goes to work for a few hours a day (which suits her) to a non-unionised deregulated job, getting paid low wages to do cleaning, washing or catering in an institution, for example, for frail elderly people. She gets paid, at work, to do exactly the same tasks as she does, unpaid, for her frail elderly parent for whom she cares at home after work, and for whom she will care for a much longer period of her life.

Caroline Glendinning is one of a number of European feminist social-policy researchers who

would see this as follows: The enforced, un-recompensed care of a loved one, caused by a neglectful state is conceptually no different from a tax levied on women in some situations and not on other members of the community. Because it is a hidden tax it is also taxation without representation.

What she is saying is pretty radical – she suggests that women in this position are subsidising government.

### Accounting for care

Other research in this area, mostly that done by economists, attempts to cost out the informal care. Whereas studies in the past have concentrated on the needs and financial circumstances of the people being cared for (the frail elderly mother, the disabled spouse, the blind child), it has been more recently acknowledged that the care-giver bears different sorts of costs. If the continuation of “normal” households is one aim of the social services, then the economic implications of the caring role need to be taken into account.

Anne Netten, who writes from within the “social production of welfare” school at Kent, identifies five types of costs of care:

- direct financial expenditure on goods and services – the carer buys in food, or takes out the laundry,
- the carer gives up non-waged time,
- the carer gives up waged time: the spouse of a person who is disabled at work gives up his or her own work in order to care for the person,
- the carer gives up career prospects,
- the carer gives up his or her own accommodation to move into full-time care.

Unless and until these costs are assessed, the principles of affordability and efficiency cannot be understood in a comprehensive way. Affordable by whom? Efficient for whom? These are not neutral concepts – nor are they “simply” economic concepts. The way they are defined marks particular assumptions about society.

Let me explore this a bit further by way of an example from the field of mental health. If people are placed “in the community” from institutional care without adequate support, the mental health budget may go down, but costs may be felt in other places – in more people applying for unemployment benefit, for example, or police and probation officers’ time, or more research going to find out why there are more social problems. But in addition to these costs, which would finally appear in budgets, there is a vast sphere of activity in society, which is an economic variable for the people involved – the carers – which never gets to be visible in these accounts.

A reduction in bed days in the hospital for one patient may be efficient for the health services (which count in the budget) but be economically

very costly for the person who will look after the patient at home.

So what? The problem with the accounting in South Africa is that we do not have a tradition of institutional care against which to base the costing. We know that the old age pension buys thousands of pensioners the right to live at home, and if they were not here, there should be institutional provision made for them. But would there in fact? Maybe – and this is a difficult idea to comprehend – they would just be thrown away?

### Relief and development

I will turn now to the second of the topics I mentioned earlier – the assumptions underlying the way relief, or welfare, is seen as separate from, or in opposition to, development.

A growing literature shows that the macro-economic policies of the World Bank and especially the International Monetary Fund rely for their success on the invisible cost of women’s unpaid time. Their structural adjustment policies shift the costs of social services from the formal to the informal sector in a way that has the same effects for women. What I find alarming is the way the definition of whose responsibility health and welfare is, has shifted: it goes to women, and it goes to international donor agencies. This signifies a quite profound shift in the meaning of citizenship – if the health care of a Rwandan is primarily paid for by a Dutch non-governmental organisation, for example.

Hidden inside this shift is an assumption of “what counts as economically important”; and it finds its reflection in the distinction that is made between “relief” (social/unimportant/dependency-producing/patch up the past) and “development” (economic/important/way to the future). And I think there are worrying things at work, in South Africa, about what is getting constructed in the discourse about these things.

There has been a burgeoning in the last decade or two of activities to do with “development”, in the form of a variety of governmental and non-governmental initiatives. There are contesting principles or approaches: some concentrate more on the delivery of alternative technology, others on employment creation, and yet others on community organisation and empowerment.

There would be no consensus between these agencies about what development really *is*. However, it is easy to find consensus among those doing “development” on what they do *not* stand for: they are not about charity, or giving handouts, or creating dependency, or applying band aids, or patching things up. So, the poor are not given “relief” in any significant way.

What those doing “development” *do* stand for are the principles such as self-help, participation,



empowerment, increasing organisational capacity, and so on. We have had excellent work done, in the building of models. However, the track record of actual material delivery of those with a development approach is not good – in this way, South Africa is no exception to the international case. Projects and programmes are too small, and are not replicable, which makes them expensive; they typically are too dependent on outside leadership and organisational ability, therefore are not self-sustaining; they frequently work to the objective disadvantage of women; and they do not succeed in reaching the really poor. They do not take on local relationships of power and dominance, and they themselves, or their benefits, are able to be co-opted by local elites. In South Africa, any development programme which really tried to turn around the relationships of power and dominance was harassed and closed down.

So, not much changes at the local level through “development”, any more than it does through “relief”. But does this dichotomy between relief and development hold water, as it were, in the real world? It is gradually being realised that famines,

military coups, and other disasters are not diversionary, short-term hiccoughs which get in the way of the linear march forward to peace and progress: they are what life is like, and what life will be like, for millions of people.

Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze have been leaders of a new school of economists who are suggesting a radical turnabout in the way that global poverty is analysed, and thereby in the way new social policies should be constructed. They say that life in the under-developed world has increasingly come to be characterised by precarious living conditions and lack of security. They seek a way out of the dilemma through looking at different approaches to the notion of security – the point of departure is that unless households have a minimum assurance of survival, they will not be able to grasp any “opportunities”. Instead of waiting for “general greater affluence” to take effect, they argue for an alternative approach which would be to: “... resort directly to wide-ranging public support in domains such as employment provision, income redistribution, health care education and social assistance in order to remove destitution without waiting for a transformation in the general level of affluence.

Women embroidering flour sacks in Northern Transvaal. Self-help projects enable women to supplement subsistence incomes.



Here success may have to be based on a discriminating use of national resources, the efficiency of public services, a redistributive bias in their delivery. This may be called the strategy of 'support-led security'."

They lead evidence for the success of the support-led approach from a comparative study of countries which have succeeded in reducing the under-five mortality rate. This is not the place for detail, but their list includes countries which would traditionally be defined as both capitalist and socialist. They show how the best performers have "repeatedly attracted attention for their active public involvement in various forms of social support, including the direct provision of vital commodities and social services".

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*"Caroline Glendinning [states that] ...the enforced, unrecompensed care of a loved one, caused by a neglectful state, is conceptually no different from a tax levied on women in some situations and not on other members of the community."*

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It is important to note that they are not arguing for endless money to be thrown at the poor. They claim the importance of providing pathways out of poverty, and they talk about the balance between direct service provision, subsidy, and regulation which I mentioned at the outset.

### **Moving towards security**

I do not have a conclusion as such. I do have the conviction that we have to speak about these issues, give voice to them, over and over again, and to insist that the economic and the social, in the field of policies and budgets, have to be seen as interdependent. I will finish with some things for consideration.

1 Informal care, the unpaid work of mainly women, is a complex issue. The recent literature from the United Kingdom sounds the warning: do not be too economic in the approach. Evidence indicates that carers get satisfaction from the role, as well as it being a burden; there is something else going on there which is different from "work".

We should take into account David Piachaud's three mistakes made by economists: "they ignore unpaid work in the home; they assume all work is a pain and not a pleasure; and they ignore the extreme pain that some work undoubtedly is".

2 There is a trend at the moment to call for a

system of dual accounting in South Africa, with the unpaid work of women being costed out, and taken into account. I would go quite far on the dual accounting, not as an end in itself (we will never get it right) but as one mechanism through which we can learn to "speak the problem", get it discussed, raise the awareness of society at large and also, especially, the decision-makers about what is invisible by present accounting systems, and within the present discourse.

3 I would stop concentrating only on social welfare for being too expensive, and for creating dependency. I would want a full and visible accounting system for fiscal welfare, and also for occupational welfare (for the latter, in particular, I would look at the government civil service pensions, and the golden handshakes which are to come).

4 I would embrace the existing pensions and grants system, make it better, and say, this is what the social programmes all over the world are trying to achieve in the area of household security (I have given the full rationale for the following assertions about the old-age pension in a paper I wrote last year):

- it is used as a household asset,
- it is well-targeted – it reaches the poor,
- it gets out to deep rural areas,
- it takes care of the problem of an increasingly elderly population,
- it is good for women,
- it is a source of household credit,
- the existing infrastructure could easily be built on to deliver more (developmentally-orientated) goods and services out to where they are wanted.

If we go for the meaning of citizenship, and solidarity, then rather than begrudging small gains and being worried about creating dependency, we could get at the meaning of security in a refreshing and relatively inexpensive way.

Finally, a salute to the Black Sash: I cannot think of a much more important thing to have been doing, over these last few years, which would make a real and concrete difference to people's lives, especially in the rural areas, than to have fought the battle to get people pensions and grants, and to have been part of the lobby group pushing for parity. □

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Pensioners discuss community issues with Sheena Duncan in Sakhile township, Standerton, Transvaal

## Going beyond advice

*"... the para-legal services provided by the advice offices are of the utmost importance in the building of a civil society", reports Sheena Duncan. "They give people the information they need to insist on the rights they do have, and enable them to organise to establish those rights which are denied them. 'Advice offices' is, in fact, a misnomer."*

**W**e are often asked whether advice offices are necessary now that "apartheid is dead". Apartheid is not dead. We still have a system of government and administration based on racial and ethnic classifications. Even when this system ends, we will remain in the boxes of poverty, relative prosperity, or extreme wealth in which apartheid has placed us.

The advice office trust is convinced that para-legal services provided by advice offices are of the utmost importance in the building of a civil society. They give people information they need to insist on the rights they have, and enable them to organise to establish those rights which are denied them. "Advice offices" is, in fact, a misnomer. They are really resource centres where people can be equipped to deal with their problems.

Even in established democracies, civilians have to be constantly vigilant to prevent the powerful and the bureaucrats from abusing human rights. We are not yet a democracy, and we have a long hard haul ahead of us before justice is established in this land.

*"In the days of the pass laws (until 1986) ..., not everyone was poor but everyone was black. The pass laws made no distinction between rich and poor. Now, organised workers and the more wealthy can cope with their problems and have access to professional assistance. The poor come to advice offices."*

## Destitution

All nine Black Sash advice offices report growing numbers of advice-seekers. Some 90 to 100 people come daily to the Johannesburg office alone, and those at the head of the queue have been known to come as early as 04:30 in order to make sure of being admitted. At the annual September advice office workshop, it became clear that the problems people bring all arise from poverty or unemployment: pensions, unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation (sometimes arising from long-ago accidents, now impossible to prove), retrenchment, unfair dismissal, debt, homelessness, and hunger.

In the days of the pass laws (until 1986), not everyone was poor but everyone was black. The pass laws made no distinction between rich and poor. Now, organised workers and the more wealthy can cope with their problems and have access to professional assistance. The poor come to advice offices.

These offices build resource maps of charitable organisations and soup kitchens in the region, but face the fact that independent organisations such as Operation Hunger are stretched beyond their limits. Nor can the destitute look to the government for relief as South Africa has a totally inadequate social security system.

Men become eligible for old age pensions at 65, women at 60. The new Social Assistance Act, although much better than the original bill, still allows the minister to decide the qualifying age by regulation and it is becoming clear that the government intends to raise the age for women to 65. At the advice office workshop we were all concerned about what this means in terms of frank starvation.

The percentage of economically active South Africans unable to find employment in the formal sector is estimated by some at 47 to 50 per cent.

In early 1992 only 7 per cent of new entrants to the job market could find such employment and by January 1993 predictions ranged from nil to 3 per cent. Two-thirds of the black population is under the age of 27, with 52,2 per cent under the age of 19. Because of "Bantu education" the majority have no skills.

Informal-sector employment and economic activity is said to be the way to go. There is a great deal too much euphoria among the securely employed in government and in "main street" boardrooms about the wonders of free enterprise and small-business development. Certainly many thousands of people are succeeding but tens of thousands more resort to such activity merely as a survival strategy and cannot be described as successful entrepreneurs. They are hungry.

From our experience in the advice offices we believe that both an extensive public-works programme and a social-assistance system are of the utmost urgency. We are urging that a social assistance system be phased in, starting with all those who are over the age of 50 and unemployed. At the moment this seems unlikely. A new "economic model" to deal with the current crisis is doubtless essential but past experience prompts us to question what the proposed "rationalisation" of social services – education, health care, welfare, housing – will in fact mean for those who are in desperate need.

Black Sash advice offices have always sought to go beyond individuals and their problems to the causes of the suffering, and then to work towards the elimination of the causes. We continue to work in this way.

## Homelessness

Half the population of the central Witwatersrand – 2,5 million people – lacks adequate shelter. Even the smallest towns now have communities of shack-dwellers, a situation caused

largely by the fearful drought of recent years. The dismissal of farmworkers usually entails the loss of shelter through eviction from the farm.

In the Johannesburg area, work in informal settlements is carried out by the Witwatersrand Network for the Homeless. The Black Sash was instrumental in the formation of the Network when the extent of homelessness became apparent.

## Violence

It is not necessary to repeat the horrifying litany of death and destruction which has hit many communities, where people live in fear. Black Sash members and field workers from Border and Albany regions were among the monitors at the Bisho Stadium when the shooting happened. Cape Western members have found that constant vigilance is required to prevent a renewal of the taxi war. Only Cape Eastern is able to report an absence of violent conflict.

Attacks on commuter transport have terrorised the East Rand and Soweto in particular. One of our Johannesburg trainees was in a taxi when the man next to him pulled out a gun. Fortunately the other passengers overpowered him before damage was done.

Morale among advice office workers was already low when, one day, someone in the queue parked his assegai on the floor beside him. Another time a man became angry at having to wait and pulled out a gun. The very next day, eight armed men tried to gain access to the office but were deterred by the security guard at the entrance to the building.

Now one of the case workers begins each day by addressing the queue on questions of tolerance and democratic process. The advice seekers have taken to this instruction with enthusiasm and the tense atmosphere has been alleviated as people chat to one another. It is essential rigorously to exclude party politics from the advice offices. People of all political persuasions come for assistance and must be able to feel comfortable. This has been a complication in the training programmes.

## Training

At the September workshop we discussed new questions arising from our training programmes. This was

sparked by a request by social workers in the "coloured" own-affairs administration in Port Elizabeth for para-legal training. There have also been problems with ex-trainees who fail to comprehend that a community advice office must be open to the whole community and cannot be the preserve of a particular group.

An advice office in the Orange Free State provides an example. The local civic association had selected candidates for training. Some months after they returned home the office was running smoothly and the civic committee told us they were doing good work. Then an African National Congress (ANC) branch was launched in the area. The advice office workers declared themselves as Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) members and said that the services of the office were only for card-carrying members of the PAC. This caused the collapse of the civic, and of the advice office, as the committee was split down the middle.

We agreed at the workshop that we will train anyone who asks, provided they are properly mandated by their community or organisation, that they demonstrate that they understand the importance of not disempowering the people who seek assistance, and that they fit into our normal training programmes. We will not do exclusive training for any group. We agreed that our training programme should be seen as part of our commitment to non-violent direct action, as a way of changing things, and our principal means of working to establish human rights.

In Johannesburg, where we run two four-month training sessions per year, we decided that if a community is sending two trainees at least one of them must be a woman. We have tried to achieve this by encouragement but it has not worked and the last group in 1992 included no women. The problem seems to be that community committees in small towns and rural areas consist entirely of men, and women present keep silent at meetings.

The Johannesburg advice office brought together all trainees during the past two years at a workshop in November. One purpose was to hear how they are coping. The second was to equip them with basic knowledge of voting procedures so that they can teach this in their communities.

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*"It is essential rigorously to exclude party politics from the advice offices. People of all political persuasions come for assistance and must be able to feel comfortable."*

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### Voter education

The advice offices are engaged with the Black Sash as a whole in a national coalition of independent organisations, including the churches, working to educate future voters. The advice offices are well-placed to do this because of the long queues each day and the network of community para-legals we have fostered through the years.

Of utmost importance is the secrecy of the ballot. Women do not believe it, nor do people who live on farms and are dependent upon the employer for everything. Residents of rural and urban informal settlements do not believe it if they are subject to the control of chiefs and headmen or warlords. Hardly anyone trusts the police to guard the sealed ballot boxes and to escort them to where the counting will take place.

A very high rate of illiteracy means that teaching has to be verbal. Drama and role play must be employed. Radio is the main source of information for most of the population – and South Africa does not yet have an independent broadcasting authority.

Many people have never held a pen or pencil in their hands. A teaching tool we have introduced, on the inspiration of a Danish volunteer, is a sheet of paper divided into squares so that people can practice making crosses which remain in the bounds of each square but are not so small as to earn disqualification on the grounds they cannot easily be counted.

The training of election monitors will be a priority, once the details of a new Electoral Act and regulations are known.

Several Trust publications have been issued during the

year. These have been reviewed in past issues of SASH.

### TRAC

On 2 July 1992, the Transvaal Rural Action Committee became an independent organisation (see SASH, May 1992). TRAC is now engaged in the struggle of communities who want their land restored. In the light of government's refusal to acknowledge any principle of restitution, not many are likely to succeed in the immediate future. TRAC also does important work with rural women, and in formulating strategies for rural development and environmental reconstruction. We and TRAC maintain close ties. □

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*Sheena Duncan served as national co-ordinator of the Black Sash advice offices for seven years until April 1993.*

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Enjoying lunch in the Hexagon Theatre

## “Never a dull moment”

*A year's work, reflected in the regional, advice office, and fieldworker reports of eight regions and Southern Cape branch, is summarised for SASH by*  
**Martha Bridgman.**

### Albany region

During 1992, Albany's campaign energy was channelled chiefly into monitoring and lobbying Codesa. The National Arts Festival was an opportunity to highlight the matter of women's representation in the negotiation process. We showed the Black Sash video; we ran a social history tour of Grahamstown, telling the alternative story of our charming settler town; and we campaigned for appropriate reimbursement of domestic workers. We also held two stands last year, one against capital punishment and one for peace.

Together with Cape Eastern and Border, we edited the January 1993 edition of SASH, giving it an Eastern Cape focus and highlighting in particular the lives of women in this region. It was a very constructive experience for us, and the celebration afterwards had an uplifting and unifying effect. We not only learnt a great deal about our region, but also gained valuable insight into the process of producing SASH. It was a privilege to work with the Cape Town editors, and we are filled with admiration for the task they do.

Our women's issues group continued in its main function of self-education. It participated in moves towards a local coalition of women, and began investigations into the cooperative

creation of a large applique depicting the work that women do.

Our fieldworker, Glenn Hollands, travelled many thousands of miles, finding himself in situations of challenge, and even danger on several occasions. As mass action appeared on the streets and Ciskei erupted, many other low-key conflicts emerged which demanded his attention and his skills. These he gave not only in his capacity as Black Sash fieldworker, but also as co-chairperson of the Grahamstown Dispute Resolution Committee and as an accredited monitor of the Network of Independent Monitors (NIM). Conflicts ranged from the infamous Bisho massacre, to local unrest resulting from the municipality's cutting water and electricity to the township.

An important aspect of Glenn's work has been the extension of the Grahamstown advice office facility to rural centres. This meant frequent journeys for the purposes of consultation and training, as well as solving problems arising out of opportunistic interventions by other so-called service organisations and by operational overlap with local civic organisations.

He has assisted civic associations with advice and training, with emphasis on the current transformation of local authorities. In Grahamstown it-

self he monitored closely the abortive efforts of the Joint Negotiating Forum, and has made constructive input into the early stages of a campaign to bring about a single city administration.

Glenn convenes and chairs the committee of the East Cape Agricultural Research Project, which researches and responds to the needs of farmworkers. He and the project's fieldworker have done research regarding drought relief, devised workshops on the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, and published articles dealing with farm workers' rights.

Increasingly, in the Grahamstown advice office, we find people are desperate to lay their hands on money to survive. A recent report in *Grocott's Mail* puts unemployment as high as 80 to 85 per cent. Many people wish to have the date of birth on their identity documents changed. In the main, their motivation has been to qualify for old-age pensions.

Insurance cases, usually involving a lack of understanding of the concept of insurance, take up a lot of our energy and time. We have in mind the production of a booklet, *You and Insurance*, but cannot promise when it will be written as we have lost key people from our insurance committee. We deal with many private pension cases. People who have been retrenched



**Else Schreiner**

are often unhappy with their pension payouts, suspecting (or hoping) that they should have received more money.

We make use of opportunities to advertise the work of the advice office, and to shape attitudes, where possible. For example, we submitted a short piece on insurance which was published in the *Eastern Province Herald*.

As a result of the focus on increasing poverty at the national advice office workshop in September 1992, several members have been collecting data on feeding schemes in the greater Albany area. Our intention is to collate the information into a resource booklet.

*Lynette Paterson, Glenn Hollands,  
Viv Botha*

### **Border region**

The Black Sash in East London is moving through a process of re-evaluation and change, with the work centered around the advice office rather than regional structures. Although the regional committee is no longer functioning, we have strengthened our advice office management structure. We are working towards a more participatory style, drawing together the workers and those members who sit on the committee. The advice office has attempted to continue to make a contri-

bution to the issues in which the Black Sash is involved on a national level, thus not isolating the region from the broader concerns.

New cases numbered 2 154 at the close of 1992. This in no way gives an indication of how many clients we see each day. The number of casual enquiries, direct referrals, and returning clients must be added to this. Besides those that are labour-related, cases are indicative of the state of the country's economy. There has been an increase in insurance-related, Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), and MVA cases.

Fieldwork continues to focus on the plight of residents of informal settlements. In the past year, struggles have to some extent shifted from shack demolitions to planned demands for land, services, and housing. The fieldworker has worked closely with civics and service organisations in the communities of Beacon Bay, Berlin, Thulani and Blue Rock. In addition, he was involved in assisting the local pre-school organisation in accessing funds from the Independent Development Trust and now represents the sub-region on the regional structure.

The advice office remains a hub of contact with other organisations. We were instrumental in setting up the local Border/Ciskei NIM and regularly attend meetings and monitor events. We form part of the Voter Education Co-ordinating Forum and participate in East London's Gender Focus Group, which is presently researching the possibility of setting up a women's centre and looking into affiliating with the National Women's Coalition. We are represented on the recently formed Domestic Worker Action Group (DWAG) facilitated by the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand.

We have participated in many workshops and seminars held by other organisations. For example, our co-ordinator gave an input at a South African National Civic Organisation health and environment workshop. We are presently working together with the Community Education Computer Society, offering a "soft skills" programme on worker issues. We also assisted Evergreen Pictures in the making of a video on the Van Schoor cases.

Lawyers for Human Rights asked our advice office co-ordinator to undertake research into para-legal ser-

vices in the Eastern Cape, Border, and Transkei regions. Case studies were included in an LHR publication, and a paper, "Para-legals: A resource for the future", was submitted. The research involved extensive travel in the region, and provided opportunity for the strengthening of links with the Border Advice Offices Forum.

There is never a dull moment in our advice office. We are continually faced with new issues that require action and involvement. The work is ongoing, but necessary and we are motivated by the fact that we are making a contribution towards the alleviation of the plight experienced by most people in our country.

*Gail Kirschman*

### **Cape Eastern region**

In 1992 the regional and advice office committees combined, as we realised that the same people were attending both meetings. Membership remained fairly static, fluctuating between 51 and 58 during the year. As some members left the area, Cathy Binnell – our "fisherperson" – brought others into the group.

There is a core of dedicated workers who are willing and able to carry the workload. General meetings are always lively and informative with members offering support and valuable comment on the various issues that have been raised. On abortion, for instance, we agreed to disagree, but supported the right of the mother to choose. Mass action caused a stir in our region, starting with the regional workshop in Port Elizabeth in August.

Regarding women's issues, Anne Knott attended a workshop on sexual harassment in Cape Town, and the

### **Jenny Clarence**





Delegates discussing advice office work in the regions

Women's Coalition was launched on a regional basis in October. We are represented on the latter by Lesley Frescura.

Judy Chalmers was part of a group that travelled around the United States and Europe looking at forms of local government.

Mid-year we were feeling very neglected by the daily newspapers as none of our letters or releases were being published. Quite timeously, the community organised a month-long boycott of the papers as they felt they were not reporting what was really happening in the area. Thereafter the newspapers decided to "get closer to the people" and we were offered a fortnightly column of our own which we are using to disseminate information on issues we deal with daily in the advice office.

We have all benefited from the work of our researcher, Lynne Teixeira, who produced a booklet on marriage laws. Debbie Matthews, our training officer, and Lynne Teixeira have represented us on NIM and Judy Chalmers on the local Peace Committee.

The January 1993 SASH focused on the Eastern Cape. Together with members from East London, some of us were able to attend the launch in Grahamstown.

In the past year the Eastern Cape has escaped the violence that has beset the other provinces but stayaways during mass action have further destabilised the labour situation. Unemployment in the Port Elizabeth area has risen from 47 to 59 per cent.

Proposed legislation for domestic workers has had a ripple effect in the advice office, with an average of six calls a week querying suggested working conditions and wages.

Aligning well with our goal of disseminating information to the community has been the work of our

Danchurch Aid worker, Kirsten Friss-Jensen, in education for democracy. She and Lotte Roed produced a very useful teaching kit. Prison work has escalated in the last year. Outrage over the issue of children in prison and police cells resulted in a working group being

appointed by the government to investigate this problem. In dealing with police assault cases, the advice office has learned of the existence of a police reporting unit, mentioned in the January 1993 edition of the Human Rights Commission report. This is under investigation before being utilised.

Black Sash protest at the suspension by the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA) of approximately 28 000 Eastern Cape pensions led to subsequent reinstatement. The CPA stance, whereby only the first four children of a legal marriage would qualify for a maintenance grant, was also successfully opposed, and clients' grants were reinstated. Another major breakthrough was the reinstatement of the maintenance grant for "grannies" who had suddenly found their payments substantially reduced.

Later in the year we learned that the district surgeons were charging for medical reviews required for disability grants, and quick action put a stop to this rather lucrative practice.

The advice office received inquiries from government employees regarding malpractice/irregularities within the government bureaucracy. This sensitive issue is still under discussion.

The training co-ordinator worked in both rural and urban areas to train for basic advice office work (21 offices were assisted in total). Training courses have become more practical, with most time spent on casework.

*Judy Chalmers*

### **Natal Coastal region**

The essence of Natal Coastal's "watershed" year is encapsulated in the preamble to its advice office report, here quoted:

"... A number of internal organisational problems in the Black Sash had led to advice office workers

feeling demoralised and there was doubt as to whether the region had the resources to continue supporting an advice office. Thanks to the determination of all concerned the advice office ended the year on a high note. This report reflects the successful restructuring of the advice office and the growth of the work. During the course of the year, Zacks Mbele, who has served the advice office loyally for over sixteen years as caseworker and administrator, received honorary life membership of the region. Zacks' dedication to his work, and the excellent function organised by Patti Geerds at which Zacks was honoured, seemed to inspire all in their determination to meet the challenge of offering an effective advice office service in the Natal Coastal region."

This determination was apparent in fruitful interactions between a mandated advice office committee under Di Oliver's convenership, an advice office co-ordinated by Seema Rumburuth, and advice office workers themselves, both salaried and voluntary. The ensuing good relationships helped produce a well-structured, well-managed organisation equipped and capable of addressing the challenges of the apartheid system's mounting legacy.

Social pensions constituted the bulk of the advice office's caseload (36,48 per cent). This was followed by labour issues (21,49 per cent) and by workmen's compensation (WCA) and maintenance amounting to 11,84 per cent. On average, 4 628 clients are seen per month, 77 per cent of whom are new cases.

Following an "objective setting" meeting, the region launched a pensions campaign. Over the course of the year, the advice office became involved, on a limited scale, in paralegal training. Much energy has also been channeled into staff training and development, with management, human rights, voter education, WCA and computer workshops/seminars/introductory courses.

An advantageous aspect of the advice office's work has been the consolidation of its formal and informal network, amongst tenants of the Ecumenical Centre as well as with outside organisations.

Suspended for six months, Natal Coastal's regional council was reconstituted at the annual general meeting on 26 August 1992. This meeting re-



vealed a consensus that the region should continue functioning – but with no increase in the availability of active participation by members.

The brief thus given an elected regional council was a restricted and very focused one, confined to the arrangement of monthly general meetings whose purpose was solely to keep members informed and in touch. Given these limitations – reduced resources, mandate, and time that committed councillors could spare – the council remains largely unstructured.

Natal Coastal is represented on the regional bodies of national organisations concerned with issues critical to this transitional period, such as the Education for Democracy Forum and NIM, as well as the Natal-based Women's Charter Alliance.

*Ann Colvin*

### Natal Midlands region

Despite the various peace accords, the violence in this region has increased, and the random killing of political leaders has left a void in many structures. In response to this situation some of our members have become accredited monitors under the auspices of NIM.

Relatively few members are really active, so careful and deliberate choices have been the key to successful initiatives. In addition to the work of the advice office, monitoring, stands, and immediate responses to specific issues, three projects have been crucial during the past year. Firstly, the research into the violence in this region has been completed; secondly, our women's group has written a well-received booklet, *You and the Constitution*; and thirdly, the environment group's proposal on recycling was accepted by the city council.

We are increasingly networking with other organisations and believe that this can be an effective way to influence change. We joined a variety of organisations in a campaign to protest the city council's refusal to negotiate with residents of Happy Valley informal settlement. This resulted in a moratorium on demolitions, and negotiations with the residents.

The advice office, the region, and our interest groups do not experience a feeling of isolation from each other. We are a very integrated region, effectively cooperating on most aspects of our work.

Concerning the Pietermaritzburg advice office, problems related to des-

titution, the displacement of people, and security force and vigilante violence have dominated the work, due to the continued turmoil and severe economic depression in the area.

State and civil pensions are increasingly the main means of survival for vast numbers of people. We continue to fight inefficiency and corruption in the allocation and distribution of KwaZulu state pensions. In addition, we are being approached by people years after they have left their employment to claim outstanding pension monies. In many instances the relevant records have been destroyed. The situation is exacerbated by lengthy and complex application procedures.

Further, large numbers of people are being retrenched without adequate notice and consultation, and arbitrarily dismissed. In this regard, we have seen an increasing number of farm workers and domestic workers whose employers appear to have terminated their services in anticipation of the extension of labour legislation. A particularly tragic feature has been the eviction of retired farm workers from the farm on which they have always lived, in the face of serious housing shortages and poverty.

Our research, education and media campaigns have focused on unfair dismissals and retrenchments and the implications of the extension of labour legislation to farm and domestic workers. Our concern with gender issues has led to much discussion, including how to best utilise the information gleaned from the office's pilot women's survey. Finally, we initiated an Education for Democracy Forum in Pietermaritzburg and plan to make voter education and training a high priority for 1993.

*Jenny Clarence*

### Cape Western region

The past year has been difficult but constructive in that we have tried to come to grips with a changing environment, falling membership, and the need for improved management.

We have realised that our

work needs to be better focused and better managed. The attendance of three regional members at the first management course held in Johannesburg early in 1992, as well as attendance by several members at the follow-up course held in Cape Town in October, assisted us in taking practical steps to address these needs. We are now consciously setting ourselves measurable, short-term goals and have our management committee in place.

Activities have included a highly successful public meeting on Codesa, held in June. It took the form of a panel discussion and was the first time we have had a National Party parliamentarian on a Black Sash platform. Attendance at monthly general meetings ranges from 30 to 40. Topics have included local government, abortion, affirmative action, the Women's Charter Campaign, and people's courts.

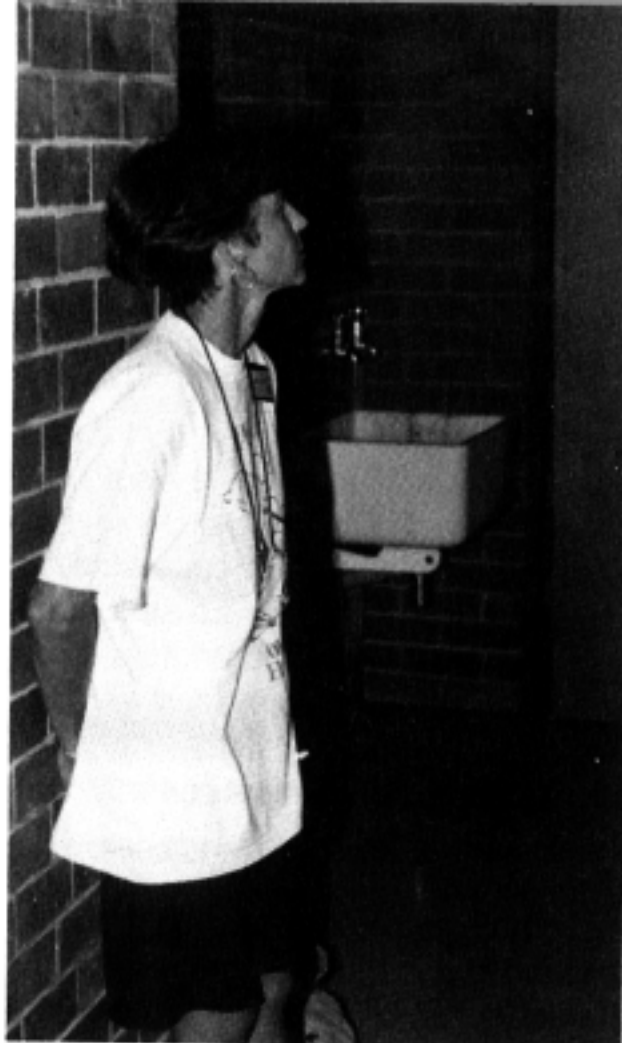
A number of stands were held during the year. The most successful were on the pension issue and one held after the Boipatong massacre. On both of these occasions we distributed pamphlets/handouts and have found this to be an effective way of informing the public on the issue at hand.

The video *The Black Sash: The early years*, was officially launched at a cheese-and-wine evening in April. It was good to see so many "senior" members, not only on the screen but in attendance at the function.

Our monitoring group's activities have ranged from struggles over land, housing, and education to marches, funerals, strikes, periods of mass action, and the hearings of the Goldstone Commission. Members are involved in the Joint Forum on Policing and NIM. The nature of this work, largely responding to unpredictable needs and

Delegates breakfast in the sun and prepare for the day ahead





Sue Joynt

requests for assistance, tends to be reactive rather than pro-active. While recognising this as necessary, the group has tried to define some areas of focus for the coming year.

During last year we were lucky enough to acquire premises for the advice office next door to 5 Long Street. Up until this time, our advice office waiting room had been a bench in a passage outside of the interview room. Suddenly we could spread ourselves. We now have a waiting room filled with colourful chairs, posters, and reading material. Our Education for Democracy group is taking advantage of this and will be doing voter education with clients. Annemarie Hendrikz took over as advice office co-ordinator at the beginning of the year and tackled her new position with energy and enthusiasm. We were also lucky enough to have a trainee from World University Service working in the advice office. As our case load increased considerably, we were most grateful for this extra assistance. The ongoing problems of pensions and disability grants made up the bulk of our work, with a steady increase in labour-related problems and destitution. David Viti organised an interview on Radio Xhosa in May and gave information on our work in a half-hour slot.

Thandi Gaqa, our rural worker in Colesberg, has made a significant impact in the area, particularly on the issue of delivery of state welfare grants. Advice office staff and regional councillors travelled to Colesberg for a two-day visit and Nomahlube Nabe maintains weekly telephonic contact with Thandi.

Both our constitution and legislation group and the women's group have regular well-attended meetings. The former did sterling work lobbying the president's council on the indemnity issue and will monitor parliament through the present session. We see our participation in the Education for Democracy campaign as a main focus during the coming year and hope that this work will help to revitalise the region.

*Thisbe Clegg*

### Southern Cape branch

1992 began with the people of Joodsekamp, an informal settlement overlooking Knysna, being served with eviction notices by the new owners of the land. This is a settled area with many of the residents having lived here since the 1940s, paying rent to the original owner. The Black Sash was asked to help the threatened community to develop a strategy to negotiate with the Knysna municipality and the CPA for the people to be allowed to stay. Although the matter has not yet been finalised, the negotiations have been successful in that the municipality has assured the civic that the land would be bought from the present owners and that no removals would take place.

At the same time the residents of Tembalethu in George were caught up in a struggle over services, and the administration and upgrading of their township, with the George municipality. The Black Sash, together with the civic, undertook to counter the disinformation campaign waged by the local newspaper by publishing a statement listing the sequence of events and steps in the negotiations. Fieldworker Phumlani Bukashe reports that negotiations between the George municipality, the Tembalethu town council, and the civic have not progressed well. Representations to the CPA for continued subsidisation of services were successful, however, and upgrading programmes in the township are running fairly smoothly.

Phumlani's fieldwork takes him to towns and villages over a vast area of the Southern Cape and we see from his reports that there are many tensions, between communities and the authorities as well as between members of the communities themselves. About two-thirds of the advice offices are not functioning properly – some of them not at all – and it is obvious that funding will not be forthcoming unless an

in-depth review of their situations takes place.

In contrast, the Black Sash advice office at Knysna has seen a large increase in the number of people seeking assistance. The economic situation has led to the exploitation of workers, especially in the building industry. Our caseworker, David Nxale, continues to monitor payouts at the pension office with the result that there are fewer complaints of short payments. The delay in granting pensions is still a problem: the average wait for black pensioners with no problems is still approximately six months.

In line with Black Sash policy on voter education, the branch has held workshops in Knysna and George. A workshop was also held for advice office workers and a conference organised in Oudtshoorn. A public meeting called by the Knysna municipality accepted our suggestion that a concerted effort be made to get all the people of Knysna the necessary identity documents and registration as voters, and further public meetings followed to put this into practice. We decided to participate in a steering committee that was mandated to prepare all people in Knysna to vote in local elections for a non-racial municipal council.

Two other successful workshops were held. One was organised at the request of the Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers' Union for its women members, dealing with women's issues in the workplace and within the union. The second workshop, on participatory management and leadership, was attended by our own members and members of various non-governmental organisations in George.

Interesting meetings have been held at which members have spoken about issues they have dealt with in other organisations. Our members are spread out all along the Garden Route, from Coldstream to Herholdt, and the work they do in their areas, together with our fieldwork and advice office is all vital to our aims of justice, equality, and democracy.

*Carol Elphick*

### Northern Transvaal region

Our focus has been on women's issues and democratic elections. The regional committee meets tri-weekly, maintaining contact with members via phone-chain. A slight decline in membership from 1991 to 1992 occurred,

largely due to stricter enforcement regarding subscriptions. Essentially no working groups exist, but work is still done around domestic worker issues and the death penalty. Our fund-raising initiatives enabled us to donate R1 000 to the Advice Office Trust.

Activities included a party for Annica van Gijlswijk (past regional chair, who was deported) where the *The Black Sash: The early years* was shown. We conducted street blitzes to distribute the booklet *You and the Vote*, and a human rights treasure hunt/car chase. General meetings focused on the effect of violence on education, election monitoring, the BBC video *War on Peace*, affirmative action, and abortion. Popo Molefe spoke on voter education at the annual general meeting.

The advice office has two paid workers (a co-ordinator and a caseworker/interpreter) and three occasional volunteers. The workers have attended workshops on such issues as farm worker legislation and voter education, and have received computer training.

1992 saw the caseload increase by 16 per cent over the previous year. Most cases were unemployment-related: retrenchments and dismissals, compensation for injuries on duty (up to 18 years ago), or severance pay from jobs left two to three years earlier. Domestic workers dismissed without notice increased in number. Consumer-related cases involving repossession of hire-purchased goods, loss of deposits at swop-shops gone bankrupt, and high telephone accounts also increased.

For the first time in advice office history, we represented dismissed workers at conciliation board meetings. Clients felt this helped towards redressing the injustice done, even when reinstatement was not forthcoming. The office is working to address complaints from clients regarding unsatisfactory service from some trade unions and industrial councils.

The advice office has links with a number of new or more rurally-based advice offices, which all draw on its resources and experience. Efforts to get an advice office forum off the ground, however, proved a frustrating and fruitless exercise. Rural communities have been encouraged to take old-age pension problems directly to the Transvaal Provincial Administration, a more empowering route.

The office co-ordinator organised a

national response to the draft amendment bill on domestic workers, appearing in radio, television, and newspaper interviews on the subject, addressing the UNISA's Women's Forum, and participating in the Domestic Workers Action Group. Other research and fieldwork centered on the role of para-legals, on paternal maintenance, and on electoral education via the media. There is an excellent working relationship with both the Legal Resources Centre and Lawyers for Human Rights.

*Isie Pretorius*

### Southern Transvaal region

Although we have fewer active members in the region we addressed a number of issues, sometimes with the help of advice office workers who joined regional council sub-groups. We took part in the campaign to prevent the hanging of deathrow prisoners in Bophuthatswana, and in a forum of abolitionist organisations.

In response to the Boipatong massacre in June, we issued a press statement condemning the murders and organised a march through the streets of Johannesburg, delivering a memorandum to the police at John Vorster Square and a letter to the Minister of Law and Order, demanding his resignation. We participated in the Coalition Against State Murder and Corruption, which was inspired by the revelations at the Goniwe inquest and the Pickard Report on corruption. This resulted in a visit to the auditor-general. Peace Action, an alliance of non-governmental organisations and churches, which monitors violence, has a high proportion of Black Sash members.

Our women's group researched and published the booklet *Open the Doors, we're coming through: Priorities for women's rights*, and helped to establish the Women's National Coalition – a member is on the regional executive. We picketed Codesa 2 to protest the poor representation of women in the delegations. Since then we have drawn up a list of women for nomination to the SABC board and will take other opportunities to promote women.

The voter education group published *You and the Vote*, of which 40 000 copies have been distributed. "Training workshops for trainers" are being held as part of our commitment to voter education. Another area of concern is the ongoing militarisation of our society.

We produced pamphlets highlighting the millions of rands spent daily on arms, for circulation at the huge Defence Exhibition in November and elsewhere.

Of 13 540 advice office cases in 1992, 9 138 were new. Most related to employment (pay, dismissals, retrenchments) and access to benefits (pensions, unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation). Others concerned identity documents, assault or abuse by employers, consumer issues, and housing. For domestic workers, the chances of getting rights with regard to UIF, WCA, and pensions seem very slim.

It appears that our input on the state crisis committee on old-age pensions made a difference, but monitoring and lobbying must continue. We have also contributed to the Centre for Applied Legal Studies research on gender and housing. The centre is collecting cases where women are disadvantaged in this regard due to custom and inheritance or other laws.

A major priority has been the training of para-legals for community advice offices. Workshops encourage the trainees to see themselves as teachers rather than solely as advisors. Much time is devoted to discussing human rights and proposals put forward by the different political parties and movements. Funding new projects is a problem and it has been encouraging to find that many of the trainees are doing the work for which they have been trained on a voluntary basis.

*Joan Osterloh and Hildegard Fast* □

Barbara Molteno



# Conference resolutions

## Affirmative action

The Black Sash notes that the centuries of discrimination and oppression in South Africa have resulted in a disproportionate distribution of human and material resources. In addition, the Black Sash notes that most of the economic, social and political power is in the hands of the white minority.

Black people, women and the disabled have been particularly disadvantaged and discriminated against. This needs to be redressed.

The Black Sash therefore resolves to work for the entrenchment of affirmative action in law and a bill of rights, ensuring that:

- 1 affirmative action is positive action, not "non-discrimination";
- 2 it does not become reverse discrimination;
- 3 it is applied in all sectors of our society;
- 4 it has clear objectives linked to achievable goals;
- 5 it has time limits;
- 6 it is regularly reviewed, reassessed and re-adjusted.

## Violence

The Black Sash, re-affirming its commitment to seeking ways of ending the violence that is contributing to the destruction of our society, and noting with concern the ongoing violence, especially in Natal but also in other parts of the country, calls upon the government to assume responsibility for the ending of the violence and the reconstructing of damaged communities by:

- 1 banning the carrying of all arms and dangerous weapons in public;
- 2 prohibiting the supplying of arms by the South African police and the homelands police to other parties;
- 3 ensuring that members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) and police act impartially at all times;
- 4 ensuring that police thoroughly investigate and follow through to conclusion all reported cases of violence;
- 5 ensuring that members of the po-



lice and SADF who are charged with complicity in the violence be suspended from duty and full investigations be instigated, with accountability to the public for the outcome of such investigations;

- 6 providing immediate financial assistance for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of damaged communities to aid in the creation of a climate for peace.

## Death penalty

The Black Sash, fundamentally opposed to the death penalty, noting:

- 1 that there are currently 350 people on death row in South Africa, including Bophuthatswana, Transkei and Venda;
- 2 president De Klerk's recent announcement that the fate of the death penalty will be debated and decided in parliament;
- 3 the moratorium which came about as a result of a decision made in Working Group 1 at Codesa;
- 4 that various groupings are calling for executions to be resumed as a means of stemming violence and crime;

and believing that:

- a) it is highly inappropriate for this illegitimate parliament to make a unilateral decision to resume executions;
  - b) hangings by the state do nothing to reduce the levels of violence in our society, do not serve as a deterrent, and serve only to cheapen the value of human life;
  - c) people currently on death row deserve to remain protected by the moratorium until such time as a constituent assembly has debated and resolved the issue;
- once again calls for the total abolition of the death penalty.

## Abortion

Believing that abortion is a moral and ethical issue of a most serious nature;

and that those who are opposed to abortion should remain free to persuade women not to abort; and be encouraged to work with others to get rid of the socio-economic deprivation which leads so many women to choose abortion at present;

nevertheless noting the crisis proportions of the problem of illegal abortion and resultant suffering and death;

and supporting the principle of women's rights to moral and physical autonomy;

therefore the Black Sash calls for the introduction of

- 1 a clause in a bill of rights as follows:

"The right to life should not derogate from a woman's right to choose an abortion should she wish to do so";

- 2 a freedom of choice bill, as follows:

" i) The state shall not restrict the right of a woman to choose to terminate a pregnancy

- a) during the first trimester; or
- b) at any time, if such termination is necessary to protect the life or health of the woman.

ii) The decision for termination of pregnancy shall be made by the woman. The state shall provide or facilitate the provision of adequate information and non-directive counselling for women considering termination.

iii) The state shall protect the freedom of conscience of any medical practitioner or health worker who declines to perform or assist in such termination, provided that such practitioner or health worker shall refer the woman to the relevant statutory service.

iv) The passage of the above bill shall repeal conflicting clauses of the Abortion and Sterilisation Act, no. 2 of 1975." □

*Lynette Paterson finds a metaphor for the Black Sash and decides that, after the shaking it received at conference, the "old Remington" is set to become "a state of the art Olympia".*

## If women ruled the world

“Wouldn't it be nice,” Thisbe said, “if decisions taken at a Black Sash conference immediately became law!”

Sarah-Anne smiled, wistfully. Hilary nodded. I watched Annemarie roll another cigarette and draw a slow, deep breath, anticipating the sweet fragrance of cherry tobacco.

“Wouldn't it be nice!”

\* \* \*

It had not been an earth-shaking conference. The only real seismic activity was caused by Sue van der Merwe's frenzied take-offs and landings in the conference corridors, as she tried to will guest speaker André Roux into flight; he was haplessly earthbound at the Cape Town airport, having missed his plane.

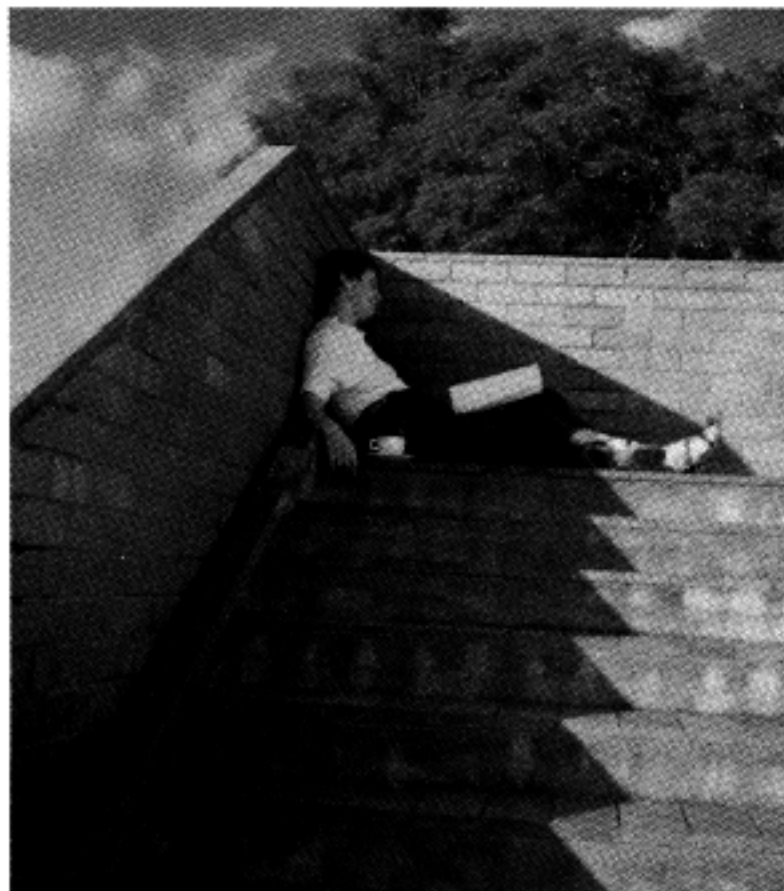
Now Sue is a formidable mover and shaker – who else among us has her own pigeon-hole at the government printer? Yet even she, in the end, could not spirit the flightless man into our midst.

And so, with time on our hands, we got down to some organisational housekeeping – or to change the metaphor and make a dream come true: we set about repairing Jenny de Tolly's typewriter!

Jenny has had the unenviable task of heading the Black Sash at a time of change and transition. Small wonder that she is plagued by nightmares of working on rickety typewriters belonging to cranky old souls! It is to Jenny's credit that she has taken the machine by its car-

riage and given it a robust shake.

Inspired by the management workshops and braced by the recommendations of the Viljoen Commission, she set us to work at “unpacking” the mechanisms of the



Lynette Paterson contemplating women power

organisation, and finding new ways of putting them back together. And there was not a single knee-jerk to be spied! It is true that there was no stampede of offers to take over headquarters in 1994, but by the end of the day regions were vying for portfolios. Before her term is up, Jenny may well find that her old Remington has become a state of the art Olympia! And 1993 may well prove to have been the conference at which the Black Sash ensured that being “in transition” did not end up

meaning being “transitory”.

So – an important conference, yes, but not an earth-shaker.

What “decisions” did Thisbe have in mind then? What were Sarah-Anne and Hilary remembering as they awaited their flight at the Durban airport?

Perhaps they recalled MamLydia's description of the “rocky road” of rural voter education, on which “the oxen cannot pull well”. Perhaps they remembered the compassion and humour of Francie Lund's economic analysis, and her image of “women with huge bosoms full of altruism”. Perhaps they relived the vivid talks on Natal violence – or the vivid Natal curry!

Perhaps they were thinking of the conference's calls for the entrenchment of affirmative action in law; for a woman to have the right to an abortion; for the abolition of the death penalty; and for an end to violence and a beginning to restructuring the damaged communities.

Brave statements and bold calls. And wouldn't it be nice if they indeed became law right then!

But perhaps these calls were far from their tired minds, and they were all simply grooving inwardly to the echo of Marj Brown's “Vote Game” rap, as Annemarie lit up and they were shrouded in the sweet fragrance of cherry tobacco.

\* \* \*

I drew a slow, deep breath, and in that mellow moment I savoured the thought that maybe one day women would rule the world. □

# Managing the Black Sash

*More paid workers, more funds: The Black Sash has changed, but how, and is it all for the good? Four members carried out a pioneering survey to find answers, and to advise.*

*Mary Kleinenberg summarises the "Viljoen Commission's" thorough report.*

An investigation "to determine exactly how Black Sash management functions at present, and following on this to look at ways of improving our management structures" was motivated by Val Viljoen of Border region in July 1992. It was seen as continuing the work begun by Sheena Duncan, Sue Philcox, and Jenny de Tolly. Sue Power of Southern Transvaal co-ordinated the project, assisted by Mary Kleinenberg of Natal Midlands, Rose Meny-Gibert of Cape Western, and Rosemary van Wyk Smith of Albany region.

The sample of members who were interviewed was reasonably representative of Black Sash views, although the Colesberg and Knysna offices were not included. Important findings and recommendations follow. It should be noted that the term "management" has been construed as "participatory management by objectives", as defined by Alan Brews.

- The Black Sash Advice Office Trust has contributed enormously to managing the growing staff component in the organisation, yet it is felt by members to be "shrouded in mystery". The commission considered dissolving the trust but, in consultation with legal adviser Raymond Tucker and others, decided to recommend that it continue in its present form.
- The trust should be responsible for the raising, distribution, and control of funds donated to the Black Sash for its service work. As it bears final responsibility with regard to employees, advice offices should comply with the conditions of employment and salaries laid down, and submit full and regular reports to the trust.
- The present system of having at least one trustee from each geographic region should continue.

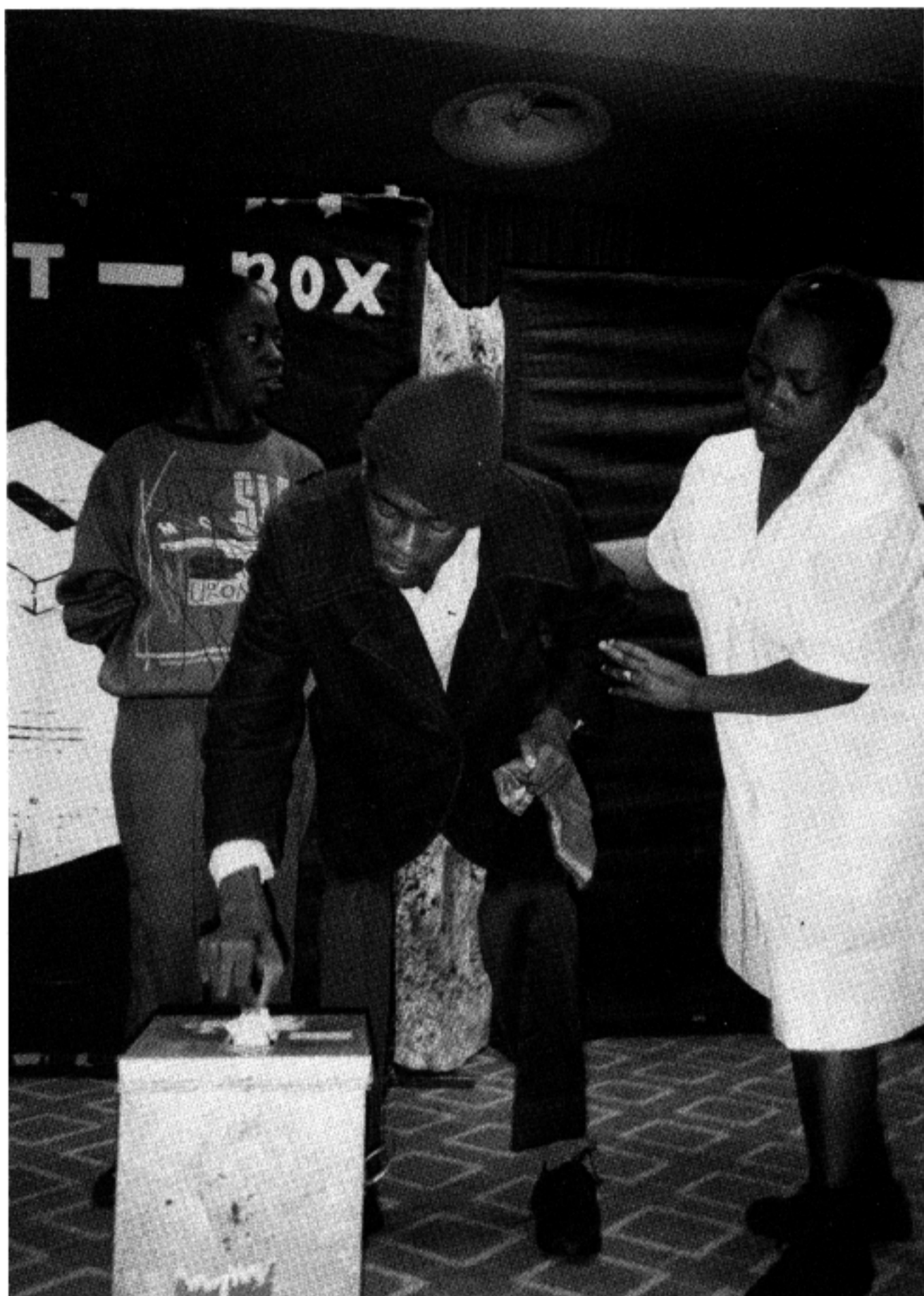
- With Sheena Duncan's resignation as National Advice Office Co-ordinator, it was recommended that this become a full-time paid position. The new co-ordinator, together with the financial administrator and the national researcher, should establish sustainable management systems at national and regional levels.
- The annual advice office workshop should be continued.
- The extended national executive and Advice Office Trust meeting should have the power to decide the distribution of trust funds to the regions. The trust should make budgetary recommendations, according to the availability of funds, and circulate them before these meetings.
- Delegates should come well-prepared to meetings, and commit themselves to attend for a minimum of one year to provide continuity.
- All new posts, or extraordinary expenditure, should be motivated in writing and circulated to regions before these meetings.
- National conference should remain the final decision- and policy-making body in the Black Sash.
- Regional autonomy should be preserved, but activities should remain within the policy guidelines set by national conference.
- The Workers' Consultative Forum is a very necessary body for representing staff issues and improving communication.
- Strategic planning should take place at national and regional levels after conference each year. Prior to conference, structures and activities should be evaluated with regard to the aims and objectives identified in the plan. This evaluation should form the basis of the annual reports.

- The "participatory management by objectives" style of management should be adopted by the Black Sash, and all regions should avail themselves of the Alan Brews workshops.
- The minutes of all meetings of Black Sash structures and the trust should be circulated as widely as possible, to improve communication.
- Active steps should be taken to keep staff members informed of Black Sash activities, and to involve them wherever possible.
- Staff evaluations should be carried out in all regions.
- The voluntary component of the organisation is vital and should continue. Volunteers as well as paid staff should have job descriptions which are clear, understood, and accepted by all other staff and volunteers.
- A proper induction and training programme for all staff, both paid and unpaid, should be introduced in each region.

The commission tried to highlight major areas of concern so that the organisation has a better understanding of the grassroots membership. The Black Sash as a whole needs to take management seriously.

## Postscript

We wish to thank all those members who gave so freely of their time, thoughts, and opinions. At first we commissioners were overwhelmed by the size of the task, and the feeling that such an investigation could be more professionally handled by an outsider. However, many interviewees told us that they would not have offered their opinions so honestly to someone who was not a member of the Black Sash. □



Voter education in action

# Democracy and fair elections

*Education for democracy worker Domini Lewis compiled reports from Black Sash regions to give an overview of initiatives around the country*

Voter education is only the beginning of a broader process of education for democracy. As a human rights organisation, the Black Sash needs to be aware of the dynamics of this process in the establishment of a human rights culture in South Africa. Voter education must not merely be seen as a way of teaching the hitherto disenfranchised about the mechanisms of balloting. It is a broader process which involves everyone as nobody has ever voted in a democratic election in South Africa. Though small numerically, we can contribute skills and a knowledge of grassroots structures to the campaign to empower people to exercise their free choice in the country's first democratic election.

Karin Chubb, Black Sash national education for democracy co-ordinator, made these points in her introduction to a regional survey of involvement in non-party political electoral education. Monitoring, she stressed, will be an important area for Black Sash membership involvement. Besides our participation in the Independent Forum for Electoral Education (IFEE), the experience of members in the Network of Independent Monitors (NIM) and observer missions to the elections in Namibia and Lesotho will inform the monitoring of elections in South Africa.

Elections will require an effective and co-ordinated domestic monitoring force throughout the election period with strong regional, local, and grassroots links who will be able to interpret and respond to the dynamics on the ground. Domestic monitors must liaise with the international observer missions to ensure that they do not merely rubberstamp a process which may be flawed.

## Education for Democracy in Black Sash Regions

### Southern Transvaal

Our campaign began last year with the publication of the *You and the Vote* booklet in basic English – 50 000 copies have been printed to date. We are translating the booklet into most of the major languages of South Africa. It has been exceptionally well received and is distributed through our and other advice offices, at workshops, by mail, and by other organisations. Every morning an advice office worker goes through the booklet with clients waiting in the queue, and includes discussion of the concepts of democracy and political tolerance in his presentation.

Through Sheena Duncan we have been attending national IFEE meetings in Pretoria. This is an important link with other organisations which enables us to share information and resources. We are hoping to set up a regional forum in the Johannesburg area soon, which will bring in those organisations which are not nationally based. We are targeting business contacts to become involved in voter education projects aimed at their staff members, and are encouraging them to make voter education part of their social responsibility programmes.

We are particularly concerned about the special needs of women voters, and have discussed this issue with MamLydia Kompe of the Rural Women's Movement. We have arranged a weekend voter education workshop with them in June to enable their members to run similar ones in their own communities.

*Gille de Vlieg*

### Northern Transvaal

The Black Sash is a key member of the local education for democracy forum, known as PRIFEE, which works on similar lines to the national forum (IFEE) – a loose grouping of independent organisations involved in electoral education who share resources and skills, and co-ordinate activities. Our advice office serves as the media collection and distribution point for the area. The *You and the Vote* booklets have been distributed through the advice office, on tables in an adjacent restaurant run by the church, and in very successful street blitzes by members wearing sandwich boards with slogans about the elections. Other organisations have requested the booklets and to date we have distributed about 2 000. We are considering doing workshops about democracy and voter education with other organisations.

In our advice office, we ask clients as a matter of course whether they have identity books. If they do not, we explain the importance of having identification in order to vote in an election. We have been in close and cooperative contact with the department of home affairs about identity book applications and processing these documents. They have sent mobile units to the rural areas, where the civics have played a major role in assisting and facilitating the process. However, the department needs to be pressurised to employ additional staff immediately in order to speed up the process as the number of applicants will increase in the next few months.

Three members and two advice office staff attended voter education workshops held recently. They will form the core of the Black Sash electoral education training initiatives in this region.

*Laura Best*

### Natal Coastal

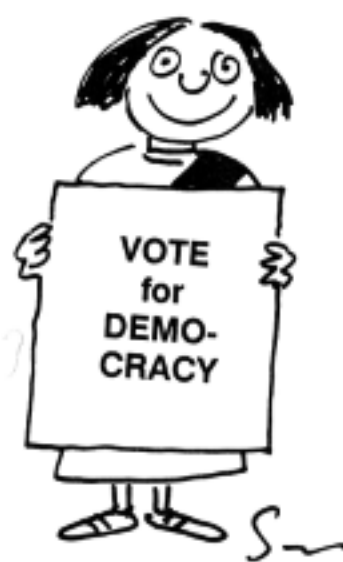
Although voter education and education for democracy is not yet very advanced, the Black Sash advice office is an important site for voter education and election monitoring training. The region is also considering whether it should produce alternatives or merely adapt voter education material which it has already received, for example the package produced by the Centre for Democratic Studies (CDS) at the University of the Western Cape.

Members attend meetings of the Natal Education for Democracy Forum. Organisations in the forum now meet to share resources and information and to co-ordinate campaigns. The forum has embarked on a four-phase plan of action over the next year. The first phase is a commitment to raising the discussion about concepts of democracy and aims to get people to talk about the violence in Natal and how it impacts on elections; intimidation; the meaning of a secret ballot, freedom of association and of choice; and ways of reacting to electoral defeat. This is based on a belief that while there is no justice there can be no peace and therefore let us hasten justice.

Later phases will involve radio programmes and art competitions about democracy in schools. We are also raising money to develop audiovisual and audio programmes focusing on urban and rural Natal. Once this is underway, we will put our energy into identity document and voter education campaigns (in practice this is happening already). The final phase will start just before the elections.

The interaction, cooperation, and organisational networking available through the forum is very constructive and has encouraged a unified vision of local needs in preparing for democracy.

*Georgina Hamilton*





## Education for Democracy in Black Sash Regions

### Cape Western

This region has been involved in the education for democracy campaign since early last year, and is represented on the steering committee of the regional forum. Initially, involvement centred on individuals such as Karin Chubb who recognised the need for the Black Sash to participate in this crucial national campaign during the planning stages. She has also been a key person lobbying home affairs on the issue of identification documents.

Members serve on the forum's sub-groups on resource development and research. They have attended training workshops on voter education and are now co-ordinating the region's activities. We are focusing on voter training through the advice office, and election monitoring. Volunteers and advice office staff do a half-hour workshop with clients waiting in the queue four mornings a week. The workshop starts with a play where two women discuss electoral issues. People are then taken through a process in which they vote, on a ballot paper, for the type of spread – peanut butter, marmite, jam – they would like on their sandwiches at tea-time. Everybody gets the spread which received the most votes.

We are also considering a voter education programme aimed specifically at rural women. Our Somerset West branch, which has members in rural areas, has linked up with an area forum based in Stellenbosch which is focusing on the needs of semi-rural communities in terms of electoral education. We have spoken at branch meetings and had a very positive response from members about involvement in election monitoring and the broader campaign about education for democracy.

*Domini Lewis and Lu Harding*

### Natal Midlands

Because of the immensity of the task and our limited resources, we decided last year to initiate a regional forum, which started work this February. Although members have been on voter education workshops, we see only a limited role for the Black Sash in this aspect of the campaign as the region lacks the manpower to carry out extensive training. We will focus on campaigns and research, but are keen not to duplicate the efforts of other regions.

We have been asked to devise a strategy to reach the rural population in our region. This is a complex problem due to the violence and the denial of access to venues which restricts political parties and non-governmental organisations, particularly in KwaZulu. Advice office staff discuss voter education issues with clients when time permits, and notices in the waiting room and elsewhere explain the importance of having an identity book in order to be able to vote. We have distributed the *You and the Vote* booklet with some success.

*Gail Wannenburg*

### Albany

Late in 1992 the region held a meeting with the local Council of Churches to discuss our roles in voter education as we realised that the Black Sash could not take on this important campaign by itself. A regional representative attended the Project Vote workshop organised by CDS in Cape Town, and planning workshops were held in Grahamstown. The working coalition between the churches and the Black Sash has been extended to include the Grahamstown civic organisation (GRACO) which has a good understanding of non-partisan campaigns.

The main thrust of our work is on educating trainers through our GRACO and rural advice office links. Due to limitations of peoplepower, the workshops focus on the basic essentials of voter education and we are unable to devote resources to discussion on principles of democracy. We have enough material and media but, unfortunately, not enough people to utilise these resources properly.

*Glenn Hollands*



Judy Chalmers of Cape Eastern region introduces their voter education package

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## Education for Democracy in Black Sash Regions

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### Cape Eastern

Voter education will be one of the main campaigns of the region and the advice office this year. We were fortunate to have the services of a Danchurchaid volunteer who prepared us for such a campaign, and on the best way to incorporate the advice office into this work.

In conjunction with another Danchurchaid volunteer based in East London, she produced a voter education kit (launched at national conference). We use the flip chart kit in the advice office to explain the electoral process to clients waiting in the queue, reaching about 35 people every day by this means. We have received very interesting questions in the discussion time allocated, and are keeping a record of these queries in order to incorporate the issues raised into the programme.

Our members have included electoral issues in human rights education programmes in high schools, and one, who is a theatre sister, conducts voter education sessions in the waiting rooms of a local hospital with the full support of the hospital staff. We have written two articles for the *Eastern Province Herald* leader page on the basics of the voting process, and on identity documents and the vote. Approximately 3 000 copies of *You and the Vote* have been distributed from our advice office and we have requests for more. These booklets help to empower people about their rights and allay fears about the voting process.

*Judy Chalmers*

### Southern Cape

We in Knysna are very excited about the potential of an education-for-democracy campaign and have decided to make it one of the key issues in which we will be involved in the year ahead. We started off making our own materials for voter education, such as a ballot box and polling booth, and so were very happy to receive the kit from CDS which contained all the materials we needed, and more.

A voter education workshop was held for the advice office committee and workers, and we facilitated a voter education conference in Oudtshoorn, organised by fieldworker Phumlani Bukashe. We saw the need to train others to take voter education into their communities, and have liaised with organisations in George and Knysna, including high schools and civics. Together with the Percy M'Dala Bus Fund committee we are working at informing women in particular about electoral issues.

The department of home affairs phoned the advice office to ask if we could let people know that they were coming to process identity book applications in the local communities. Our advertising through pamphlets and on the radio was so successful that they were inundated with people wanting to apply for identity books. We were very happy to be able to assist them.

*Tessa Edwards and Sylvia Reid*

### Border

Our Danchurchaid volunteer, together with the volunteer based in Port Elizabeth, developed a voter education flipchart kit. It has been tested with advice office clients, with para-legals, and with farmworkers, and has been workshopped in local communities. The advice office staff has been trained in how to use the kit, and translate it as part of workshops. Most of our voter education campaign has been conducted from the advice office as we have not had sufficient response from the membership.

We have linked up with other organisations to start an education for democracy forum in East London and are now part of the national IFEE structure. Advice office workers serve as representatives on working groups which focus on voter education, media, election monitoring, and lobbying.

*Penny Geerds*

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**N**ational conference decided that the Black Sash has an important contribution to make to the Education for Democracy campaign.

The tasks include training, lobbying (for political tolerance and for access to women as well as rural communities), material and resource distribution, and monitoring the full process of elections. The Southern Transvaal region will co-ordinate the voter education aspect of our work on a national basis.

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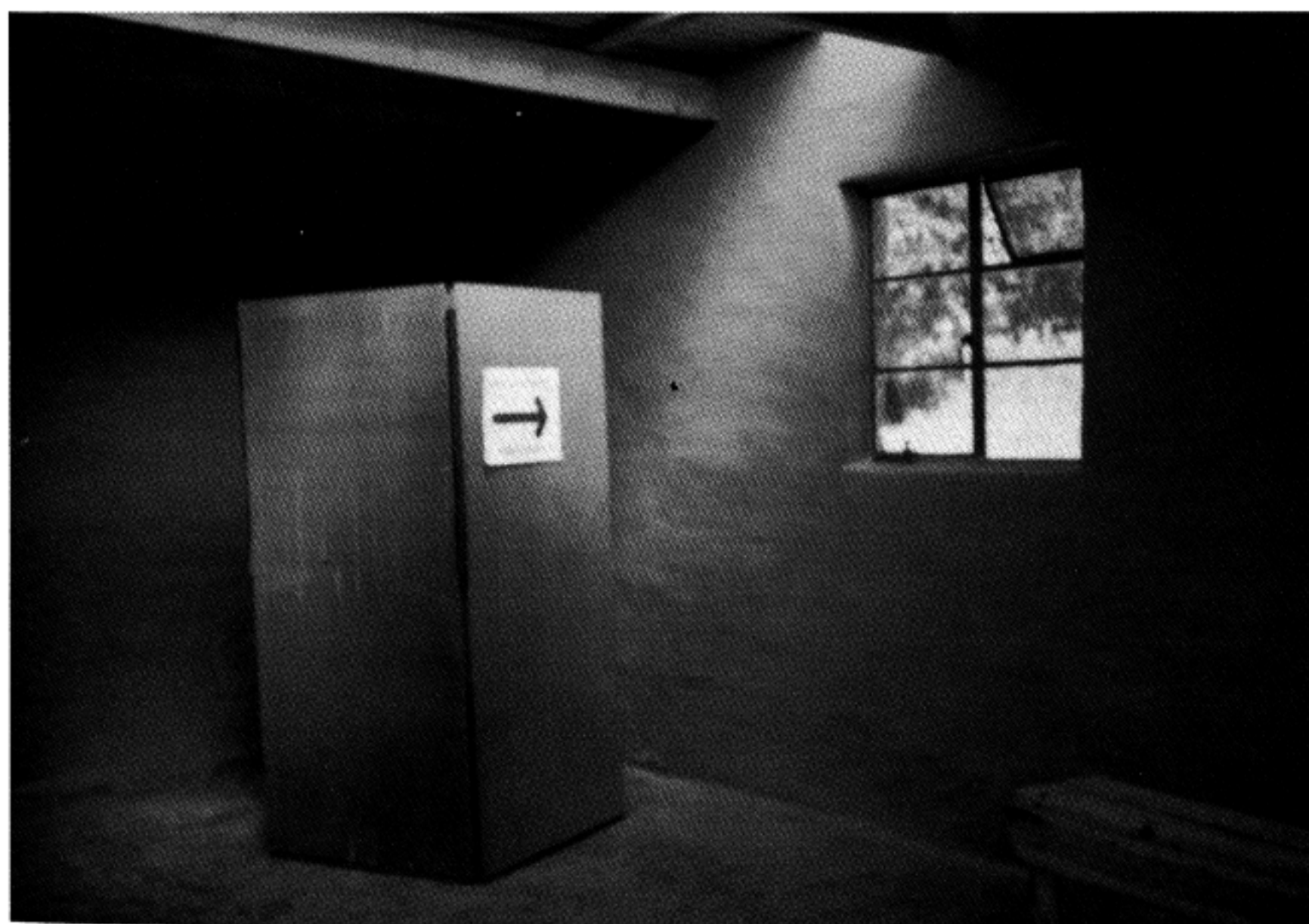
# The Mountain Kingdom goes to the polls

*Domini Lewis observed Lesotho's first democratic election in 23 years, and shared her experience with conference delegates.*

I was invited to join the Catholic Justice and Peace Observer Mission, to observe the elections in Lesotho on Saturday, 27 March 1993, as part of the United Nations (UN) international contingent. Although we were only in the country over the immediate election period, and are unable to comment on the situation prior to the election, we all agreed that as far as we were aware the elections were free and fair, and reflected the dignity, tolerance and discipline of the

people of Lesotho in their realisation of a democratic electoral process.

When we arrived on Thursday evening, Maseru was very quiet. There were no posters, party-political banners or colours advertising the elections as these had been banned due to concern about a repeat of the violence which followed the last elections 23 years ago. I found this censorship of democratic choice problematic in an election billed as the first step towards a transference to a democratic society.



A voting booth in a rural polling station in Lesotho

*"Long queues, mostly of elderly and women voters, waited patiently and tolerantly, often without water, shade, or food."*

On Friday, a day declared a national holiday to enable citizens to return to their constituencies to vote, we were allocated our observer partners, drivers, and interpreters. There were 65 constituencies, each serving about 10 000 registered voters, and 1 600 polling stations. Observers were spread throughout the constituencies and covered 465 polling stations. Some travelled by horseback and helicopter, or 4-wheel drive vehicle to reach their posts and spent the weekend in rural communities.

I was teamed with Thami Maesela from Justice and Peace Johannesburg. We were allocated constituencies 31 and 32, Thaba Bosiu and Korokoro, with 43 polling stations, at the base of the Maluti mountains near Maseru. As we visited each polling station and spoke to the electoral officials, we became aware of a problem which was to hinder the election process throughout the weekend. Not one of the polling stations we visited that Friday had received any election material or ballot boxes. At 20:30 we met women, at our last polling station, who had been waiting since 06:00, and were very worried that they had not been informed of the reasons for the delay. Our observer mission identified the breakdown in central co-ordination and the poor system of distribution of election materials from the election office in Maseru as most damaging to the electoral process.

On Saturday we were ready for our driver at 05:30, in order to observe preparations at our first polling station before voting commenced at 07:00. At 07:30 our driver arrived. He had walked 15 km from his home to the government car depot as no transportation had been provided for him. As he had spent the previous evening delivering ballot boxes to polling stations, we had first to return to Maseru to get petrol at the government depot which only opened at 08:00.

Voter turnout was high (estimated nationally to be 80 per cent). People travelled fair distances on foot to reach their polling stations and slept there the night before. Long queues, mostly of elderly and women voters, waited patiently and tolerantly, often without water, shade, or food. Voting was conducted in church or school rooms. The electoral officials, who were mainly women teachers, it seemed, did their best under trying circumstances.

Once allowed inside the polling station by the special constable on duty, voters gave their voter registration slips to an electoral official, had their names crossed off the voter registration list (if the polling station had received one), and a fluorescent torch was shone on their hands to ensure they had not voted before. Then voters were passed on to the presiding officer. It was this step in the

voting process which I found the most exciting. The presiding officer gave last-minute voter instruction, going through the ballot paper which was well set out and easy to use. She explained what the voter had to do, and how to make a mark anywhere on the symbol or in the block for the candidate of choice. This meant that by 10:00 most polling stations had only processed about 100 voters, but I think that it was a crucial and effective empowering tool for semi-literate and elderly voters, and we should consider this approach in our own elections. We did however feel that, given her responsibilities and the problems and delays on the day, this work should not have fallen on the presiding officer but rather another suitably informed official.

The voters then went into the polling booth, often made of bedspreads hung from the ceiling and pegged together, cupboards, desks, doors, or bricks. Officials were so concerned to ensure secrecy that candles had to be used as the booths were pitch dark inside. After voters made their marks, the electoral officials showed them how to fold the ballot papers in a very complicated manner, and then to place them in the ballot box. Voters had to dip their index fingers in ink which many people were hesitant to do as it looked like thick red cow's blood. After wiping this off with a tissue, the voters left the polling station.

The process seemed to work without incident in the majority of polling stations. However, the delay in delivering voting materials meant that voting started slowly and late – some places reported 11:00, 17:00, and even 06:00 on Sunday morning as the time voting began. This, and the fact that insufficient and inadequate material was sent to meet the needs of the voters, was seen by observers to be the main stumbling block in the Lesotho elections. The geography of Lesotho, the remoteness of rural communities, the poor transportation infrastructure, and inadequate communication contributed to the delays. The electoral officers had to make do with limited resources and, frequently, to improvise when indelible ink, torches, ink pads, batteries, lamps, candles, matches, toilet paper, wax and string failed to arrive, which should have been supplied by the electoral office in Maseru. On many occasions, no or insufficient ballot papers were provided for polling stations, despite an official number of voters appearing on the voter registration lists. This led to tensions when the electorate had to wait in the heat of the day.

Missing or incomplete voter registration lists seriously hampered the process, and there was a lack of uniformity in the way polling stations resolved the problem. Locks on ballot boxes did not correspond to the accompanying keys. On three occasions in our constituencies, the lids had to be raised to enable people to insert their ballot papers as the locks could not be opened. The women presiding officers were strict and disciplined and would not have allowed anyone to interfere with the boxes. The ballot boxes were

also far too small for the number of papers they were expected to hold, and polling stations were not given enough boxes to meet their needs. Presiding officers used school rulers to force more ballot papers into already full boxes and, when this became impossible, transferred the papers to plastic bags and cardboard boxes, resealed the boxes and carried on.

Votes were counted at the polling stations after the last vote was cast. Due to the delays and an extended voting period, this only happened on Sunday in some constituencies. As far as we are aware, the counting was conducted in a free and fair manner. The main problem was in the layout of the tally sheet, which had certain discrepancies for which the electoral office in Maseru was to blame. We were concerned that officials had been at their stations since early Saturday morning and were surely exhausted by the time the count began. In future elections the number of electoral officials should be increased, and split into two teams, one to focus on voting and one on counting.

After the polling station count, ballot boxes were taken to the constituency returning office for their collective tallies to be counted to determine who had won in that constituency. The security of the ballot boxes when in transit was seen to be problematic. A number of observers were called upon by the electoral officials to assist and provide transportation, and accompanied the ballot boxes to the returning offices.

I believe that the presence of an external, non-partisan and independent observer mission made an important and positive contribution to the election process. Our presence helped to defuse tension arising from the problems and delays on the day, and strengthened the confidence of voters and the electoral officials. We were, however, aware that, due to circumstances on the day, we were obliged to work beyond our brief as outlined in the UN briefing documents. Observers were involved in dispute resolution, communicating on behalf of electoral officials and the district secretaries, and transporting election materials and ballot boxes to polling stations. We certainly learned from our experience in Lesotho, and will be able to draw on this as we prepare for the first democratic elections in South Africa. □

## Voter's Rap Song

**H**ey you! Yo! Do you really care?  
Care about your country and want to have a share?  
A share and a say in what is going on?  
Well then, dudes, come and listen to my song!

A vote is coming up – it's a chance to have a say  
But before you can participate you need to have a way  
A way of showing you are 18, and a citizen  
Yeah that you are old enough and South African

### Chorus:

Yeah, it's the vote game – for us all  
For black and white, for short and tall  
It's the vote game – for young and old  
It's the vote game – for change so bold.

Too long we've been told just what we've gotta do  
Where to live and where we're going to  
Limits on our learning left us all a-yearning  
For a future that is free and for democracy!

### Chorus:

Yeah, it's the vote game ...

First step is a visit to the Home Affairs guy  
You can get your ID there, and you don't have to buy  
All it will cost is two photos of you  
And some proof of your age and where you live too

### Chorus:

'Cos it's the vote game ...

Don't let no-one tell you what to do  
Or who to vote for – this isn't cool  
Your vote is your secret – no-one will ever know  
Not your husband or your wife or your boss, so go!

Just think of what you want in South Africa so new  
Think of the past and the lies – untrue  
Listen to the leaders and look at what they do  
And you will see what's coming to you

And on the voting day, if it's fair  
You can put your cross into the square  
Next to the party you agree  
Will make South Africa safe and free

*Marj Brown*

The "Voter's Rap Song" performed at conference by members of Southern Transvaal region



# “Inside” versus “outside”: Two models for lobbyists for women’s rights

*In September 1992, six women from the Western Cape embarked on a 12-month Women’s Advocacy Education Pilot Project which took them to Zimbabwe and the United States.*

*Thisbe Clegg, who is the Black Sash team member, reports.*

With the political changes taking place in South Africa at present, including discussion of a new constitution and bill of rights, there has been a sense of urgency to ensure that issues of concern to rural and urban women are on the agenda. The Grail, an international women’s ecumenical organisation, came forward with a project to train women as lobbyists. The trainees were chosen from the Western Cape on the assumption that Cape Town will continue as the seat of parliament.

The Women’s Advocacy Education Pilot Project will take a year to complete and provides that the six trainees:

- be exposed to two distinctly different methods of advocacy;
- work as a team to adapt a women’s advocacy model for South African needs and structures;
- evaluate the pilot project, jointly and with grassroots groups.

The first of these objectives was met in September/October 1992. We began with three weeks in Washington/D.C. where we learned about lobbying “outside” of government. Then we spent two weeks in Zimbabwe where we gained insight into lobbying from the “inside”, through the Women’s Desk in the Zimbabwean government.

## **The United States**

Lobbying has become a major “industry” in Washington/D.C. There are some 8 000 registered lobbyists in the city, and an estimated 80 000 who are unregistered. This method of gaining support around specific issues works well in America because of the system of government. Members of the House of Representatives and Senate are not tied to party voting as members of parliament have been in South Africa. They can and do vote independently and therefore are more approachable individually. The stands they take on issues are recorded and available to public scrutiny, and the electoral sys-

tem makes them vulnerable to pressure from their constituents.

I was placed with a lobby group called Common Cause, and was struck by certain similarities with the Black Sash. Both deal with issues of clean, accountable government and both have a strong voluntary work force (drawn from some 280 000 members in their case). Both support and form alliances with other organisations when appropriate. And both are financed by dues and contributions from the membership.

Common Cause employs four full-time lobbyists. I accompanied them to “the Hill”, as the Capitol building is known. Maintaining a presence and contacts are important points. This was handled professionally and I did not feel that legislators were just being “battered up”. The lobbyists with whom I worked were well-informed and there appeared to be mutual respect. Other methods are used to ensure that their message is heard: articles in the papers, radio talks, TV talk-shows, public meetings, and a quarterly magazine. Staff members who meet the public are thoroughly briefed and assisted to practice their responses to counter-arguments.

## **Zimbabwe**

Kathy Bond-Stewart, a member of The Grail and leader of the Community Publishing Process – known as “the Book-team” – met us in Harare. She co-ordinated our Zimbabwe visit and a co-worker, Sylvia Kuimba, was our facilitator.

In the first flush of Zimbabwean independence, women’s issues were high on the government’s agenda. It was the United Nations “Decade of the Woman” and strong women made their voices heard. Moreover, women’s rights were of prime concern to Sally Mugabe, the president’s wife. The Women’s Desk enjoyed a good relationship with the Ministry of Justice, a Ministry of Com-



Representatives of the Women's Advocacy Education Pilot Project – Thisbe Clegg, Gertrude Fester, Mpolokeng Lesela, Sharon Stanton and Nabs Wessels – at the Capitol in Washington/D.C.

*A common factor from the inside or the outside is the need to maintain contact with the "grassroots" – to consult them regarding their needs and to educate them as to their rights. From the advocacy team's observations, in both America and Zimbabwe, the gap in communication between those making the laws and the people on the ground is a stumbling block to democracy.*

munity Development and Women's Affairs was formed, and the controversial Legal Age of Majority Act became law. No longer are women minors all their lives, but gain their majority at age 18. Other important new laws affecting women's status are the Matrimonial Act, the Maintenance Act, the Family Leave Act, and the Inheritance Act.

Despite these achievements, the overall impression is that women's issues have taken a back seat as far as the government is concerned. Also, women who pushed for change feel marginalised by their own sex – labeled as Western feminists, and regarded as extreme. It is now seen that, often, new laws were passed without prior consultation or sufficient effort to explain their benefits, particularly in the rural areas. For example, groups of women whom we met were concerned that the Legal Age of Majority Act allows daughters to leave home at age

18 and marry whom they please, whether *lobola* is paid or not. People need to understand their rights and the way in which the law works for them.

Towards the end of 1989 the Women's Desk was moved to the Ministry of Political Affairs. The government was criticised for using state money to fund party politics and this ministry was dissolved in July 1992. At present the Women's Desk is in limbo but, in any case, it seems to have lost its impact over the years. It must have power and resources to be effective but the tendency has been to leave any legislation that vaguely hints of women's issues to that department.

We left Harare by kombi to visit extension workers and women's groups in the country districts. The signs of drought were most depressing and Mutirikwa Lake, our first stop, was only 2 per cent full. In general, the women we met considered that their situation had improved since indepen-

dence even though their lives are still hard. In Bulawayo we met very articulate and active women and, in fact, almost everywhere we had lively discussions concerning women's lives and work, their views of government policies, and the problems facing women worldwide.

### "Inside" versus "outside"

Our exposure to two methods of women's advocacy persuaded us that it is more advantageous to work from outside of government.

A women's desk or ministry may benefit from being "inside" government but is hampered by being tied to its current policy. The Zimbabwean experience has shown marginalisation, a lack of power, and inadequate resources. Ideally there should be people in all the ministries who further the position of women in each portfolio. This should be co-ordinated and monitored by the Women's Desk to achieve meaningful change in the status of women.

Lobbyists "outside" are better placed to criticise government actions and legislation. But to make an impact, a lobby group needs a reasonably large membership base. This frees it from dependence on donor finance and the commitments this usually involves, and gives power to its campaigns. In South

Africa we face the fact that only a small percentage of women are conscientised around the issue of women's rights.

A common factor from the inside or the outside is the need to maintain contact with the "grassroots" – to consult them regarding their needs and to educate them as to their rights. From the advocacy team's observations, in both America and Zimbabwe, the gap in communication between those making the laws and the people on the ground is a stumbling block to democracy.

### A vision for the Black Sash

Grail member Sally Timmel, who was the driving force behind the advocacy project, sees a need for a "mid-wifery" organisation – one which will act as a conduit between the legislators and the public. On the one hand it would assist the citizenry by translating existing rights and the content of legislation into accessible language; on the other, it would become part of a network for conveying the needs of the public to the legislators. With its history of reliable information gathering and a non-partisan stance, the Black Sash is ideally placed to become a major lobbying force.

But to become an influential lobby group, we need to broaden our membership base and increase our public

profile. The issues we take up should be clear and focused. We will need short-term goals, to maintain energy and enthusiasm, as well as the tenacity and patience to keep up the long-term battles.

Certain practices of Common Cause may be useful in this respect. For example, each year they run an opinion poll, asking members to put forward issues on which they think the organisation should be working. Priorities identified in 1992 were:

- pressing for the enactment of legislation to fundamentally reform congressional campaigns, including campaign funding;
- upholding standards of ethics and making government officials accountable for their actions;
- pressing for adherence to basic principles of equal rights for all citizens.

Common Cause publishes numerous studies which are released to the press, reporting on issues the organisation has taken up. This would be a natural extension of traditional Black Sash work.

The Women's Advocacy Education Pilot Project runs until September 1993. The six-woman group is organising a series of workshops with the aim of developing an effective women's lobby. □

### Black Sash "lobbyist"

(term under review)

The constitution and legislation group of the Black Sash, which draws together members of the national executive and the Cape Western region, works in close liaison with members in other regions. Its report documented submissions made in response to proposed legislation (the women's rights bills, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the regulations concerning farmworkers and domestic workers and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, and the Electoral Commission) and actions undertaken to oppose the Further Indemnity Act. The group also brought a resolution to the conference. What follows is a

somewhat shortened version.

It is resolved that: the Black Sash re-commits itself to monitoring parliamentary debates about legislation affecting constitutional and justice matters. These would include

- a) interim measures of local, regional, and national government; dismantling "own affairs" and homeland systems;
- b) the transition to a new constitution (including a "multiparty forum");
- c) human rights (and particularly women's rights);
- d) measures which affect advice office work. Regions and advice offices should be regularly informed.

Commitment to this work includes analysing draft legislation, publicising the issues, mobilising other organisations, and lobbying members of parliament ... Ideally it would mean employing someone to co-ordinate this work and provide continuity, enabling Black Sash members to lobby successfully by setting up networks, and gathering information. It is unlikely that this could be done entirely on a volunteer basis. We propose that a contract position be established and funds sought to maintain it.

This was unanimously accepted, with enthusiasm for the work which is in accord with the new vision statement adopted by the conference. □



# A new constitution – whither and when?

*Mary Burton's chronology of progress and setbacks on the road to democracy records the events which have shaped a collective memory of hope and despair.*

## The Black Sash's "Codesa watch"

The Black Sash's March 1992 national conference fell between the two sittings of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) which took place in December 1991 and May 1992. While welcoming the fact that a national negotiating forum had been established at last, the Black Sash criticised the composition of the forum: it was made of parties or groupings whose support varied greatly or had not been tested; furthermore, few women were involved, creating a distinct imbalance. Criticism was also directed at the cumbersome and opaque nature of the process. Delegates to national conference undertook to monitor Codesa proceedings, to lobby its members, and to make its discussions more accessible.

## The breakdown of Codesa

When Codesa 2 convened on 15 May 1992, a serious obstacle to agreement arose in Working Group 2, which was dealing with procedures for drafting the constitution. The division was based on the majority required for the constitution to be adopted, on the role of a senate or upper house, and on the pace of constitutional transition. Underlying this were sensitive issues of regional autonomy and concerns about the likely lack of power of minority groups to influence final outcomes.

There was widespread despondency at this setback, but the establishment of a "management committee" in place of the working groups seemed to indicate a way out of the impasse. It was still hoped that agreement could be reached on interim government arrangements in time for parliament to act on them before it adjourned.

The management committee met on 25 May, but made little progress, and the government and African National Congress (ANC) held several bilateral meetings aimed at clearing up differences. These were hampered by the government's determination to proceed with legislation on matters which had been intended to be part of the negotiated process, for example, conscription. On 18 June, F. W. de Klerk announced that an October session of parliament would be held, and it was hoped that at least some legislation for transitional arrangements could be enacted then.

Simultaneously, the country was devastated by the massacre of Boipatong (on 17 June, the night after Soweto Day). On 23 June the ANC announced its withdrawal from Codesa negotiations, even from the talks between ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa and minister Roelf Meyer, and that it would revoke all provisional agreements reached at Codesa. Codesa was dead, it seemed, having cost an estimated R14 million.

## Demands and counterdemands

The ANC would only resume negotiations if significant progress were made on a number of issues:

- Establishing an interim government of national unity and a democratically elected constituent assembly.
- Immediate cessation of the government's "campaign of terror against the people and the democratic movement".
- Terminating all covert operations, including hit-squad activity.
- Disarming, disbanding and restricting to barracks all special forces as well as detachments comprising foreign nationals.
- Suspending and prosecuting all officers and security force personnel involved in the violence.
- Ensuring an end to repression in self-governing territories and homelands.

*"The huge cost to the country of further delay, measured in economic terms and in injury and loss of life, is too great to be borne. It is to be hoped that this knowledge will spur all participants to reach an early accord, without sacrificing the necessary attention to justice and human rights."*



Mary Burton

- Immediate implementation of a programme to phase out hostels and convert them into family units.
- Installing fences around all hostels.
- Posting security guards permanently at hostels.
- Regular searches of hostels by multilateral peace structures.
- Banning the carrying of all dangerous weapons in public.
- Setting up an international commission of inquiry into the Boipatong massacre and all acts of violence.
- Releasing all political prisoners at once.
- Repealing all repressive legislation. (*Argus*, 03.02.1993)

The ANC's mass-action campaign was roundly condemned by the government, but in its reply of 2 July the government made a number of amendments to its own earlier position:

- It abandoned its insistence that minority parties should have a disproportionately high representation in a transitional senate.
- It proposed regional representation in the senate, with an equal number of seats for each region, allocated according to proportional party support in each region.
- It accepted a 70 per cent majority for deciding on a transitional constitution, while still insisting on a 75 per cent majority for a bill of rights.
- It agreed to discuss with the ANC measures to deal with violence, and confirmed that regulations to ban the carrying of weapons were being drafted, and further steps concerning illegal possession of arms would be considered.

De Klerk called for a meeting between himself, ANC president Nelson Mandela and Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), but this was rejected by the ANC in a memorandum on 10 July. The Security Council of the United Nations (UN) demonstrated its serious concern at the breakdown of the talks, and at the end of July sent Cyrus Vance to bring the government and ANC together.

### Progress – and more setbacks

During August relationships began to improve: the ANC's mass march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 7 August, and Mandela's indication that the ANC would resume talks if there were clear evidence that the government was making serious attempts to address its demands, led to a more conciliatory position from De Klerk. At the same time the government was holding meetings with the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), both outside and inside South Africa. Talks between chief negotiators Meyer and Ramaphosa were resumed. The government agreed to the UN's proposal that the Goldstone Commission should enquire into security force involvement in the violence. Even when De Klerk's conference of parties supporting federalism was regarded as an attempt to bolster the strength of one sector against another, pre-empting round-table negotiations, communications did not collapse.

One of the demands for "levelling the playing fields" was the recognition of the right to free political activity. The march on Bisho on 7 September was aimed at emphasising this demand and calling for the removal of Ciskei's military government. The devastating consequences reverberated around the country, and negotiations were once again in danger. Nevertheless, urgent talks – and the release of a number of prisoners, including Robert McBride and Barend Strydom – averted a breakdown, and the "Record of Understanding" was reached on 26 September.

"In terms of the 'Record of Understanding' the two parties agreed that all prisoners whose imprisonment related to political conflict of the past and whose release could make a contribution to reconciliation should be released. The summit agreed on a total ban on dangerous weapons in public, subject to special permission granted

by a retired judge and assessors in each province. It was also agreed to fence off certain hostels in such a way as to take into account the dignity of hostel dwellers and the surrounding community. And the ANC undertook to review mass action." (*The Argus*, 3 February 1993)

This bilateral agreement was denounced by Buthelezi and spokespersons of the Concerned South Africans Group (Cosag), the Conservative Party, Bophuthatswana and Ciskei. Buthelezi unveiled his unilateral draft constitution for Natal/KwaZulu, making a strong bid for autonomous regional powers within a federal state.

The short session of parliament was held in October, although it could not meet all the expectations of legislation to implement steps in the constitution-making process. However, several measures were passed empowering the state president to deal administratively with changes from "own affairs" to "general affairs", and allowing for persons who are not elected members of parliament to serve on the cabinet for an indefinite period. During this session parliament rejected the Further Indemnity bill which provided for amnesty for politically-motivated crimes. This legislation was subsequently passed by the president's council. (The Black Sash vigorously opposed this legislation, and continues to monitor its implementation.)

### Towards an interim government

In November De Klerk proposed that elections for an interim government should take place by March or April 1994. The ANC was seeking an earlier date, and this issue was debated during the bilateral *bosberaad* in December. Further meetings in January 1993 led to plans to resume multiparty negotiations. The government and the IFP held a number of talks, sometimes fraught with disagreement over the degree of autonomy sought for Natal/KwaZulu, but the IFP and other COSAG members appeared willing to participate in a multiparty forum. Talks with the PAC also made progress in this direction.

While advances towards the multiparty talks were being made, parliament (the last tricameral parliament?) was once again in session. Interestingly, the National Party (NP) government introduced draft legislation in

February which might more properly have been among the issues for negotiation: a charter of fundamental rights, and three bills dealing with women's rights. Critics (including the Black Sash) have speculated that these have been put forward partly as an electioneering tactic to secure women's support for the NP, and partly in the hope of protecting the rights of minorities in advance of the transition to a new system of government. However, even these very points could suggest that the NP expects an election and also a new constitution with a bill of rights in the near future.

By 1 March, some 15 months after Codesa 1, all indicators pointed towards multiparty talks. The government was meeting with the PAC and its military wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army (Apla); the PAC held talks with Venda in Tanzania in March; more parties indicated they would join the talks, and optimism grew perceptibly.

There was considerable press commentary during March on the "how" of elections (SADF must be confined; independent media must be established; and so on) and also on possible outcomes, with research bodies making forecasts. The multiparty preparatory conference on 5 and 6 March, held once again at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park, took a decision to hold full-scale multiparty negotiations, and these were scheduled for 1 April. The decision was hailed on many sides, and UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali voiced his satisfaction.

The 26 parties consisted of: African National Congress, Afrikaner Volksunie, Bophuthatswana government, Cape Delegation of Traditional Leaders, Ciskei government, Democratic Party, Dikwankwetla Party, Inkatha Freedom Party, Intando Yesizwe Party, Inyandza National Movement, Conservative Party, KwaZulu, Labour Party, Natal Indian Congress/Transvaal Indian Congress, National Party, National People's Party, Orange Free State Delegation of Traditional Leaders, Pan-Africanist Congress, Solidarity Party, South African Communist Party, South African government, Transkei government, Transvaal Delegation of Traditional Leaders, United People's Front, Venda government, and Ximoko Progressive Party.

The road ahead began to look considerably clearer. The "political playing field" would be improved if not levelled by freer political activity in all regions; an administrative body would be created which would have broad support (the "Transitional Executive Council" as it began to be called); this body would prepare for elections to vote for a representative constituent assembly, which would finally produce the new constitution and could also serve as an interim government of national unity. There were still great differences, for example over the question of whether the transitional executive should place the SADF, police and other state security forces (for example those in the "homelands") as well as Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) under a joint command structure; also over whether the election should be conducted under an independent commission or by the department of home affairs. Differences existed too over the position of the "homelands". The gravity of widespread violence continued to pose a severe threat. As the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) pointed out, "neither five bilateral agreements nor two multilateral accords had succeeded in reversing the upward trend" of deaths resulting from political conflict—more than 15 000 between 1984 and 1993.

### Black Sash concerns

The Black Sash will need to continue and strengthen its monitoring role. Among the many issues of concern will be:

- *A government of national unity:* Idasa's Alex Boraine says in *Democracy in Action* (28.02.1993) that "the decision to form a government of national unity for a period of at least five years is the only sensible choice" and gives credit to the South African Communist Party's (SACP) Joe Slovo for suggesting this. It may be true that such a government would be able to play a caretaker role while dealing with reconstruction and development. But what of parties which may not endorse such a government? They would have considerable power to disrupt the process, and a government which has internal divisions will not be able to guarantee stability. Furthermore, what will become of the important role of the opposition in traditional democratic systems, if "the opposition" is within the government itself?

- *The electoral process:*

In the urgency to reach the long-desired outcome of a national election, the Black Sash will need to cooperate with all who seek to ensure that such an election is free and fair. Fostering National Peace Accord structures and voter education programmes, monitoring procedures, devising methods of preventing coercion, and building a climate of political tolerance will be crucial.

### Parallel negotiations

While attention has tended to focus on the ups and downs of national negotiations, it is heartening to note that a number of national and regional negotiating processes have been developed. These have dealt with local government, education, the economy, health and welfare, and the important debate about regionalism or federalism. When the time comes for the putting-in-place of the new constitution, the work done in these various national and regional bodies will form the building blocks from which the new society will arise.

### Postscript

The assassination of Chris Hani, secretary-general of the SACP, on 10 April, and the fury and despair which followed, placed the negotiation process under enormous stress. Nevertheless, the SACP, ANC and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) immediately called for calm and for a continuation of talks.

Subsequent statements by all parties indicate that the multiparty conference will proceed, with pressure from the ANC and its allies for the immediate setting of an early date for elections. There is widespread agreement on the reincorporation of the "independent" homelands (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei), even as soon as the end of May.

The huge cost to the country of further delay, measured in economic terms and in injury and loss of life, is too great to be borne. It is to be hoped that this knowledge will spur all participants to reach an early accord, without sacrificing the necessary attention to justice and human rights. The new constitution must be worthy of the suffering of those who have helped to make it a reality. □

The speakers at the special session on Natal and violence were:

**Jenny Irish** of the Human Rights Commission, Durban, an active monitor of Natal violence and instrumental in setting up the Network of Independent Monitors in Natal;

**John Aitchison**, head of the Centre for Adult Education at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg; research worker who has made a special study of the origins of violence in Natal;

**Thomas Hadebe**, a fieldworker for Peace in Natal (PIN), a politically independent, internationally funded conflict-resolution organisation whose services are respected, and often called upon, by supporters of both the ANC and Inkatha;

**Gerry Maré**, a lecturer in sociology at the University of Natal, Durban, a political commentator best known for his co-authorship (with Natal Coastal chair Georgina Hamilton) of the book *An Appetite for Power: Buthezi's Inkatha and the politics of "Loyal Resistance"*.

### Jenny Irish

Mere death toll statistics, for example, the 390 deaths in Natal political violence in the first three months of 1993, are no indication of the true extent of the violence: they say nothing of the occurrence of non-lethal violence and intimidation, or of the suffering of the injured, the bereaved and the dispossessed – suffering which will have untold long-term effects. Statistics may also not help us distinguish victims from aggressors, and the HRC frowns on groups which, seeking to make propaganda and political capital out of death and destruction, falsely proclaim themselves to be victims.

Natal violence has increased since 1990, and some observers link this to a decrease in the Transvaal over the same period. Further, attacks are gaining in sophistication, with a trend (34 per cent of recorded incidents in 1991) towards the use of small groups of attackers, wearing balaclavas as disguise and moving swiftly to and from deliberately selected targets. They are heavily armed with AK47s, G3s or shotguns. Potential witnesses are shot

and this killing is indiscriminate – even tiny babies may die. Surviving witnesses are unwilling to testify for obvious reasons.

In 1991 more than 70 people died in this type of attack at Empangeni and Ezikhaweni. The *modus operandi* was so consistent that a single group may have been responsible, perhaps working as a kind of hit squad. Whether or not this is true, the number of assassinations of well-known political activists in the region has increased, as have attacks on returnees, four of whom were killed in one area during the week before national conference. There are more ambushes of passenger vehicles, too, and these also seem well-organised, targeting specific individuals or members of specific political groups.

Levels of intimidation are difficult to gauge. It is seldom reported, but seems rife in rural areas as a way of forcing recruitment or attendance at rallies, while the blatant display of weapons during marches is intimidation in a different form.

Violence is greatly exacerbated by

# “The simplest way to encourage peace is to reward it”

*This summary of the conference session on Natal was prepared from a verbatim transcript by Stephanie Alexander, Natal Midlands region.*

the availability of firearms: Government action against illegal weapons has been inadequate. The security forces have come under suspicion as possibly making arms available, and the KwaZulu government readily issues guns to its “functionaries”, some of whom are involved in the violence. KwaZulu’s decision to issue shotguns instead of G3s simply replaces one lethal weapon with another even less traceable: it is surprising that the Goldstone Commission has welcomed this. Multilateral disarmament is vital, and the present vague and confusing legislation is ineffectual and unacceptable.

Tension between Inkatha (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC) is heightened when KwaZulu local authorities deny the ANC the right to hold political meetings: this does not bode well for election campaigns. Another source of tension is the denial by local and tribal authorities of burial rights to ANC members – this causes great suffering to the families concerned. The ANC and Inkatha leaderships may to some extent be to blame for these tensions, but the South African

government is by no means as neutral as it claims. The security forces still seem to be actively involved in the violence, and the HRC often receives reports of "shoot-outs" that are really unlawful killings, or unlawful assaults (beatings, torture), and of the involvement of men in South African police (SAP), South African Defence Force (SADF) or KwaZulu police (KZP) uniforms in organised killing raids: it seems unlikely that all of these uniforms were worn as disguises.

The other side of the coin is studious non-involvement – when security forces do not respond to warnings of an impending attack, or when they respond, but stand by as passive onlookers. The problem is compounded by cover-ups in which there is reason to believe even senior police officers participate, and by patchy, selective investigations whose progress, or lack of it, seems based on the political affiliations of victims and perpetrators. Thorough, impartial investigation to identify perpetrators and prosecute them is essential and would go a long way towards halting violence. Instead, there is strong evidence that the KZP is the single biggest obstacle to peace in Natal, especially now that its powers have been extended by the South African government, and the SAP no longer patrols areas controlled by the KZP.

The Goldstone Commission's findings have hardly begun to deal with Natal violence, and its recommendations have, anyway, not been implemented by the government. Worse, though people respect the commission's investigators, the fact is that the investigators lack the authority to use the evidence they gather, and to prosecute. This is frustrating for both investigators and victims and is leading to a general disenchantment with the Goldstone Commission.

### John Aitchison

Points raised at a 1988 meeting of the Natal Midlands region of the Black Sash continue to be relevant.

- 1 South Africa now, as then, is governable but not manageable – superficial order enables the country to function, but deep distress pervades townships and rural areas.
- 2 Violence was already deeply embedded in 1988. Five years later it is clear that its eradication will be a very long process. From 1984 on-

ward, political violence shows a pattern, growing more distinct in 1990, 1991 and 1992, of almost monthly outbreaks. Such a rhythmic pattern is alarmingly symptomatic of military-style strategic and logistical planning. There has been a slackening off in recent months, with some indication that a reduction in Natal violence coincides with an increase in the Transvaal, and *vice versa*. Do certain fighters move between the two? In Natal the ANC-IFP violence now seems self-sustaining, and could fester on, independent of political change in the wider South African context.

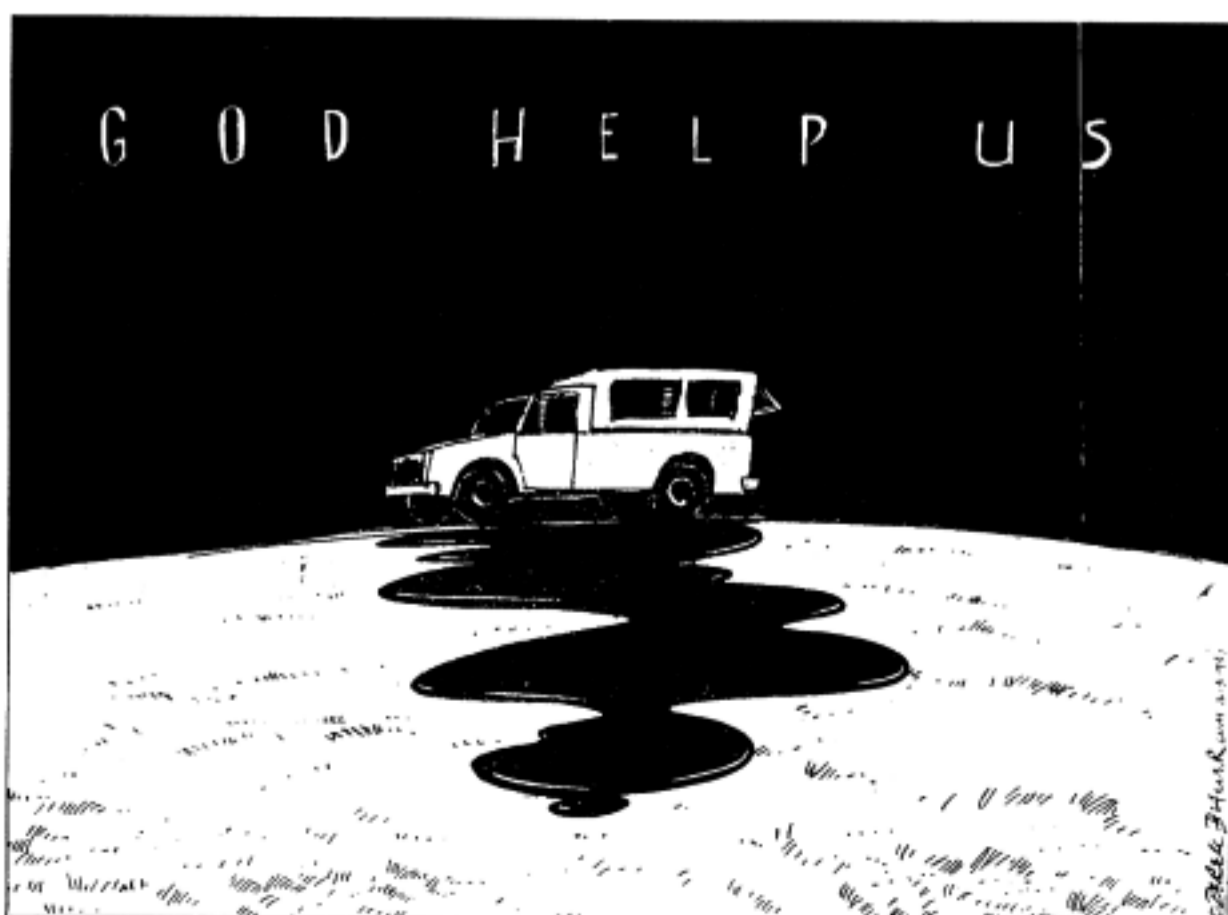
- 3 In 1988 it appeared that violence was useful to the government because it distracted attention from state culpability. Now, state-linked machinery supposed to deal with violence, such as the Goldstone Commission and the National Peace Accord, is essentially diverting attention from the causes of violence and what must be done to eliminate these causes.
- 4 Government assistance for refugees and for reconstruction was not forthcoming in 1988, or in 1990, when 20 000 refugees in need of housing, food, and medicines were in camps in Pietermaritzburg. Although some R6 million had been allocated for reconstruction in this

region, disbursement was made conditional on the cessation of violence.

- 5 It is true now as it was in 1988 that few, in the general push for political change, consider the political losers – in this context, probably the IFP. Future planning must include a programme of aid, protection and education for the losers.

It is worth reviving some of the 1988 suggestions for future useful work by the Natal Midlands region. These include:

- a) Continuing pressure on the state to cease evading its responsibilities in the matter of violence. This could be achieved by dissemination of information, and by putting pressure on those able to influence the government, for example big business and the international community.
- b) Encouraging peace moves, especially by non-government organisations such as churches and civic bodies. At present, state-linked bodies such as the National Peace Accord and the Regional Dispute Resolution Boards are unsatisfactory, tending to attenuate the power and vigilance of human-rights organisations and to distort information from violence-torn localities. The simplest way to encourage peace is to reward it. Why does this never happen? In Imbali, for example, a longing for peace in



the community gave rise to the Imbali Rehabilitation Committee, but no tangible support – in the form of funds for rebuilding and for promoting the well-being of young people – was forthcoming.

- c) Putting pressure on the police for swift and thorough investigation of violent incidents, emphasising that the real deterrent to criminal behaviour is not the threat of hanging or imprisonment, but the certainty of being caught. In South Africa there is no such certainty.
- d) Pressing for the installation of representative, democratically chosen black local authorities and the disbanding of corrupt – even murderous – bodies kept artificially in place by the state.
- e) Healing the deep trauma caused by violence – through counselling, and through training and education designed with an understanding of the importance of attending to inner human needs.

### Thomas Hadebe

Although PIN was first established as a monitoring group under the Democratic Party, it has since left the political sphere in order to ease and broaden the scope of its work: it is now an independent trust. PIN monitors violence and facilitates peace initiatives. Its two field workers concentrate on areas close to Pietermaritzburg.

Some peace “agreements” are not agreements at all, as, for example, at Table Mountain, where violence has ceased because the IFP, with the aid of the security forces, has driven out ANC supporters, who now live as displaced persons. A common tactic of the security forces is to destabilise an area and then send in the internal stability unit (ISU) to arrest persons active in starting peace initiatives, thus making it difficult for PIN and other peace-promoting organisations to gain headway. The ISU has its own investigators and, having the authority to demand and remove police dockets, can cause evidence to disappear. There is great mistrust of the police.

The quality of leadership in any area determines if lasting peace is possible. Rural areas differ from townships in that it is important to know tribal protocol and to understand the nature of the community’s relationship with the adjacent farming com-

munity. It is alleged that partisan farmers supply arms to preferred groups, and rural communities are suspicious of farmers’ “helpful” suggestions, for example, for neighbourhood watch systems.

Occasionally, with the cooperation of well-disposed members of the SAP, peace agreements between ANC and IFP can be signed, opening the way for community development. Monitoring provides information about communities and their needs, and development should go hand in hand with the peace initiative – to make it work, showing that peace brings substantial rewards. Patient negotiation is required so that, eventually, displaced persons can return to their homes.

### Gerry Maré

Clearly violence has bedevilled the negotiation process in South Africa. A second major obstacle is regionalism – the subdivision of South Africa into regions, each with certain powers. At present there are four provinces and 10 bantustans. The National Party’s suggestion for the future is subdivision into seven regions, while the ANC version has 10. The versions have Natal in common, and both NP and ANC propose that a delimitation commission establish borders – without deciding on regional powers or how these are achieved. At this year’s opening of the KwaZulu legislative assembly chief minister Buthelezi rejected this suggestion. KwaZulu resents the idea that others will decide on its boundaries and its powers, and has itself already travelled “a long road” of exploration of constitutional possibilities.

Historically this began in 1951 when the Tribal Authorities Act laid the foundation of the bantustan system. In 1959 the Promotion of Self-Government Act established eight (later to become 10) bantustan areas, and tribal authorities were to become regional authorities. In 1970 the Zululand Territorial Authority was established, and became the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) in 1972: KwaZulu was now a self-governing territory with certain powers. Inkatha was formed in 1975. By 1977 the powers of the KLA included control of education and the KZP, all with the approval of the ANC in exile.

Buthelezi’s establishment of the region during the 1980s was for him a

stepping-stone into national politics – a stepping-stone compounded of violence, of setting up administrative structures, and of research. The most obvious component of the last was the 1982 report of the Buthelezi Commission, appointed in 1980, in which prominent academics, politicians, and business people were involved. His next goal was to consolidate the bantustan with the whole of Natal.

The Indaba of 1986 focused not on research, but on working through the information needed to argue for the region (interestingly the Indaba, like Codesa, met behind closed doors). Arguments against the Indaba at that time have been forgotten as, perhaps, has the fact that while it was sitting the government decided to abolish the provinces, ending elections at that level. Thus, at the end of the Indaba, Buthelezi indicated that he did not want non-existent provincial power, but bantustan power across the whole region. A strange picture emerged here, of a possible powershift in which the bantustans would be the new power regions in South Africa and the provinces, whittled away and impotent, run by functionaries appointed by Pretoria. In August 1987 a joint executive authority was established to consolidate cooperation between the Natal authorities and the government of the KwaZulu bantustan.

Towards the end of 1992 the KwaZulu government devised a constitution and presented it to the KLA, which formally accepted it. The constitution establishes a strong state. At present it applies only to KwaZulu, but if it goes to the joint executive authority, and if the JEA approves it, the JEA becomes the transitional authority for the whole region. The next step would be to test the opinion of the citizens of the region in a referendum, and acceptance would turn it into the constitution for the entire region.

In other words, this past and projected chain of events will create federalism from the bottom up. This region and its constitution will have to be recognised nationally by the negotiators and those working on a constitution for the whole country, and the potential for dissatisfaction and disagreement among those opposed to federalism and strong regional power bases is very great. □

# The squatter ultimatum

*Leslie Bank explores Oupa Gqozo's hidden agenda*

The recent warning by Ciskeian military leader Oupa Gqozo that squatters either get their shacks registered with the Ciskeian government or face having them "thrown into a rubbish pit" is shocking.

It comes as a surprise partly because it follows so shortly after the November agreement between the Ciskei government and the African National Congress to put an end to political repression in Ciskei. But, it also comes as a shock because Gqozo had previously urged people to build houses wherever they found open space.

So why has Gqozo reneged on these commitments? Why does he now demand that: "I want my people to obey my headmen, my councillors, my chiefs, and my tribal authorities"? And, more interestingly, why have squatters been singled out for special attention?

The accepted answer to all these questions is that Gqozo wants to build up his African Democratic Movement (ADM) in preparation for forthcoming multi-party elections. But why focus on squatters?

To answer this question adequately, I think, we need to look beyond the Eastern Cape at Gqozo's close relations with Ulundi and his open admiration of the Inkatha Freedom Party. Is he not looking to Inkatha as model for the restructuring of his puny ADM?

It is well-known that as Inkatha lost support in the formal townships of Natal during the mid-1980s, it has increasingly turned to squatters and hostel dwellers as its core constituencies. In fact, these marginalised groupings are the movement's new recruits.

The way Inkatha has established its dominance in the shacklands around Durban, Pinetown, and Pietermaritzburg has been through the control of land. By maintaining its ability to allocate land, Inkatha has indirectly kept control of many squatter settlements – even though

they often appear to be the personal fiefdoms of apolitical criminals.

The basis of Inkatha control lies in its ability to guarantee shacklords *de facto* rights to land. If Gqozo can reassert control over the land occupied by squatters on the outskirts of King Williams Town, Dimbaza, and Mdan-tane, he might also win the allegiance of the impoverished residents of these areas.

Declaring that squatters register their residential sites with the Ciskei government is clearly a first step in this direction. Once the land is in the government's hands, it can be selectively re-allocated – a process through which Gqozo could foster his own brand of "shacklords".

But the politics of "warlordism" might have other attractions for Gqozo. For a start, it would undermine

the incumbent civic structures in squatter settlements and uproot the first tentative moves towards more democratic forms of local government. "Warlordism" of the kind seen in Natal is an extremely authoritarian and violent form of governance, which is embedded in exploitative relationships of patronage and dependency.

Inkatha "warlords" define themselves by their ability to impose their will on others and hold onto power through the use and threat of physical force. In the words of one analyst: "Taxes, rent, levies, and conscription are arbitrarily imposed by the dominant social grouping with the threat of violence ever present to ensure the compliance of the ordinary shack residents."

Another significant feature of "warlordism" is that it tends to destabilise surrounding communities. Warlords seldom have many resources of their own, and are constantly tempted to grab land or consumer goods from neighbouring communities. In Natal, this usually means sending a private army into a nearby township.

Gqozo could benefit greatly from these "cross-border" skirmishes because they would destabilise the ANC-dominated townships in this region.

The fragile and tentative traditions of democratic local government that are emerging in Eastern Cape squatter settlements and the generally positive relations that exist between squatters and township residents are very positive attributes of the urbanisation process in this region. For the sake of peace and stability, Oupa Gqozo must not be allowed to get his blood-stained hands on the squatter settlements of Ciskei. □

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## Gqozo gives Gqozo "leadership" medal

BISHO — Brigadier Oupa Gqozo, Ciskei's military ruler, awarded himself a medal yesterday for 'leadership of a high order'.

Altogether, he received three medals, the Sandile medal, the Ciskeian Defence medal and the Chief of the Ciskei Defence Force Commendation medal. Brig. Gqozo awarded himself the Sandile medal 'for service and devotion to duty or for having displayed leadership of a high order'.

The other two were awarded to him by his Minister of Defence, Colonel S. S. Pita following a medal parade at One Ciskei Battalion military base here yesterday. □

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*Leslie Bank is with the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown*

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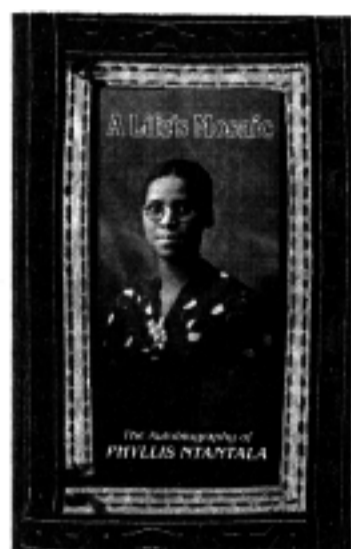
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**REVIEWS**


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**A Life's Mosaic**

*Phyllis Ntantala (Mayibuye Centre, Bellville, and David Philip, Cape Town, 1992)*

“Some years ago, my daughter-in-law Casey once asked me: ‘P, how did you and Joe meet? Just tell us.’ Laughing, I dismissed her question with: ‘You know, where I come from, that is one subject parents do not discuss with their children. Maybe one day I’ll tell you how it happened.’ We both laughed and left it at that.”

Despite this, or because of it, Phyllis Ntantala started writing her autobiography. The title is very appropriate, for that is what it is: a *mosaic* of impressions, memories and thoughts, spanning her life from early childhood in Transkei, where she led a sheltered and privileged life, via her education in the Eastern Cape (Healdtown, and Fort Hare, where she was one of the few female students early this century), through the beginnings of political activism with her husband A. C. Jordan in the Orange Free State and in Cape Town, to life in Great Britain and the USA. But wherever they lived, the Jordan family remained “political animals”.

It is very interesting to see her feelings about and interpretations of the educational system for Africans in this country even before Bantu Education – a real eye-opener for some of us. Ntantala’s and Jordan’s fight against Bantu Education is relatively well documented here.

After the author and three of her children had to leave South Africa with an exit permit, the reality of life in the USA in the 1960s hit her: “The racism and discrimination I encountered in South Africa, I find in the States too ... in both countries, the potential for a black person to be harassed is always present.” The treatment of her family in the USA was in some aspects not different at all to what political activists in South Africa went through at the same time (see chapter “Pallo Is Endorsed out”).

Very interesting, too, is the short description of early squatter camps in the Cape Town vicinity (1946) and eviction of squatters (1954), which leaves the reader feeling that not much has really changed.

The deep love and admiration for her father, against whom every other male in her life seems to be measured – and hardly ever measures up – spans almost the whole book. Ntantala claims her father raised her as a feminist. Indeed, the autobiography is a fascinating mixture of feminist insights and the opposite: on the one hand Ntantala sees herself as one of the earliest supporters of women’s liberation; on the other, for example, even though not thrilled about it, she “agreed” to an arranged marriage.

This seems to be an honest autobiography: the author calls herself “arrogant” and “vain” but despite this she does not seem to attempt to hide her shortcomings. At times the reader hits walls: when Ntantala touches on issues that seem very interesting (and important), but then drops without further exploration, the reader still burning to know more.

In the early part, the mosaic qualities of the book leave African traditions and life so cryptic in places as to make it difficult for the uninitiated to understand everything – readers will have to find out for themselves.

It is a challenging book. In one place Ntantala remarks: “I hate a location; it confines one not only physically but also mentally.” This book enables readers to mentally jump over these borders and start to understand how the “other side” lived and lives.

*bth*




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**Wathint’ abafazi: You have struck the women**

*(The Battered Women’s Working Group, 1992)*

This useful and practical publication confronts the issue of domestic violence against women, a subject too often pushed aside by society, including the police and the courts, as a private matter that does not merit interference to protect the victims.

Based on real-life case histories, it tells of the experiences of four South African women in different strata of society, all of whom have been battered and abused by their men. It explores their feelings of hopelessness and terror, and suggests courses of action they could follow to escape from the vicious spiral they feel they are trapped in.

The most successful aspects of the book are the careful placing of the women across the social spectrum so that all women should be able to identify with the plight of at least one; the positive and rational tone maintained throughout; and the useful information and practical suggestions. At the end there is a section on how to run a workshop on battering and a list of relevant contact organisations.

More difficult to come to terms with is the political content, which seems to imply that a constructive political solution will end the problem. Sexism is not the exclusive preserve of capitalism, and women are battered in their homes in all societies and under all political systems. It is the fight against gender oppression and prejudice that has to be won before domestic violence ceases, and South African women are still at the beginning of that struggle.

*Mary Starkey*



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## REVIEWS

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### Open the Doors, we're coming through: Priorities for women's rights

(Black Sash Southern Transvaal region women's group)

Involvement in women's issues has become part of the Black Sash's agenda. The women's group of the Southern Transvaal region has made a significant contribution by exploring concerns in the areas of politics, the law, the family, health, education, work and society.

Most men and women in South Africa have been denied basic human rights. However, women's rights have been accorded second place, as is illustrated clearly throughout the booklet. The violation of women's rights historically and now – discrimination on all levels of society, lack of recognition, impoverishment and inadequate access to resources, subordination and domination – is discussed. The booklet reiterates the overwhelming need to take appropriate measures to address gender inequalities and the suffering of women.

The writers have drawn from articles of the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and made additional recommendations. In doing so, they have taken an international document and interpreted it for the South African situation. The major subtext, however, seems a personal quest to illustrate the position of women. Such a "passionate" portrayal of the plight of women has clouded the essence of the booklet. Although ways forward are suggested (including ideas for legislative reform), insufficient time is spent on detailing how the recommendations could be put in place on a practical level. The broad outlines do not get down to clear and specific guidelines on courses of action – on how to redress imbalances, conscientise and self-empower women, and ensure the protection of rights.

Although one is left with a sense of not being sure "how to come through", the authors have provoked thought on an array of issues relevant to South

African women. In addition, they have moved the debate forward from a local-specific perspective to a wider dialogue and development. It is a booklet in which women speak in their own voice, a committed voice, and it is essential to the current discussion on gender and the position of women in a future South Africa.

Penelope Geerds

### YOU AND THE CONSTITUTION



BLACK SASH

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### You and the Constitution

(Black Sash, Natal Midlands, Pietermaritzburg; 1992)

This attractive and excellent little booklet addresses educationally-disadvantaged women in South Africa, giving information on what a constitution is, how it affects women, and how we can get involved in constitution writing. Remarkably comprehensive and lucid, with good layout and illustrations which cleverly augment the text, it should meet the needs of its target readership, but also be useful to many of us more privileged educationally.

Every Black Sash member should become familiar with this booklet, and help promote it. It would be good to have it available in other languages as well.

Nancy Gordon

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### All Schools for All Children

Julie Frederikse (Oxford University Press, Cape Town; 1992)

In interviews presented in a user-friendly style, Julie Frederikse charts the pitfalls and gains of the Zimbabwean experience of "going open".

Whereas the combating of racism remains a major concern emerging from studies of integration processes in America and Britain, closer to home it is the emergence of class consciousness that threatens to distort the provision of equal education. Demographics being a fundamental variable in education, this manageable look at our neighbours' situation is timely and appropriate.

Anne Hill

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### African Laughter. Four visits to Zimbabwe

Doris Lessing (HarperCollins Publishers, London; 1992)

Do yourself a favour: read this fascinating account of four trips Lessing made to Zimbabwe after being a prohibited immigrant for over 25 years. She writes with passion and insight, comparing very different situations in 1982, 1988, 1989 and 1992. Hardly a subject not touched upon – land, literacy, women, communism, corruption. Here is a very wise woman writing about her impressions of a country she clearly loves deeply; but she is not uncritical. Many situations remind me of my time in "independent" Transkei, a lot reflects on our country – and everything is relevant for a future South Africa.

bth

## REVIEWS

**Anton Lubowski:  
paradox of a man**

*Molly Lubowski and Marita van der Vyver (Queillerie Publishers, Strand – undated)*

Southern Africa's liberation history is full of complex, paradoxical personalities, yet few are as colourful and prominent as Anton Lubowski, the German-rooted, Afrikaans-reared lawyer from Stellenbosch who played a central role in the final stage of Namibia's independence process. His brutal assassination, at the hand of gunmen, who shot him in cold blood in front of his Windhoek home, its close link with South Africa's military hit-squad activities and the dirty-trick allegations spread by General Magnus Malan to implicate him in military intelligence activities, made his case known around the world. The fact that the identity of the killer and those who gave the orders have not yet been disclosed in a court of law – notwithstanding all the leadership changes in the relevant state departments – keeps his case topical, and makes further action a moral imperative.

Lubowski's mother, Molly, who stood behind him during all his years of political and legal activism, wanted to tell the world who her son really was and why the accusations of military-intelligence activity are unfounded, given his principles and his style of "work and play". Marita van der Vyver joined her as co-author and they have produced a lucid, carefully researched, yet warm-hearted sketch of Lubowski's action-packed and highly committed life. The book brings together all the often contradictory strains of his personality. His stormy marriage, his boundless joy in living, his strong sense of humour, an equally strong sense of taste and propriety – all of these are addressed, together with the political, diplomatic, trade union and legal dynamics of his time, which he indeed helped shape. The reader is also given a valuable glimpse into the late years of pre-independence Namibia.

This slim and modest book is an

early example of a genre of biographical literature likely to blossom during the next decade or two. What makes it stand out above other personal testimonies is, above all, the unresolved nature of Lubowski's death – and the fact that those responsible are still at large just waiting to be pardoned by the state president.

At the end of the book the reader is all the more convinced that the full facts – and deeds – relating to such crimes should be put to a court, and the question of a pardon can only be decided thereafter.

*Wolfgang H. Thomas*

**You and the Vote**

*(Black Sash, Southern Transvaal, Johannesburg; 1992)*

This Black Sash booklet on the vote and the election, published in September 1992, is a valuable tool in voter education and has already been widely used. Note that it is not intended as a do-it-yourself kit for newly literate first-time voters – who might well find it intimidating – but is a teaching book for voter education groups.

Anyone wanting to help promote a fair and free election should be familiar with the material in this booklet, and be ready to pass it on. The booklet is available free in a number of languages from all Black Sash offices.

*Nancy Gordon*

**NO BLOOD  
ON OUR  
HANDS**

POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE NATAL MIDLANDS  
1987 - MID-1992  
AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE  
"WHITE" POLITICAL PARTIES AND BUSINESS  
ANNE TRULUCK  
BLACK SASH

Recently published:

**No Blood on our Hands – Political violence in the Natal Midlands 1987 to mid-1992, and the role of the state, "white" political parties and business**

*Anne Truluck (Natal Midlands Region of The Black Sash, Pietermaritzburg, 1992)*

A review will be published in the next issue of SASH.

**POEM****Mother's help**

*G. D. Field*

These girded skirted agitators that attack  
standing silently draped in a black  
sash  
waive the cash  
that might have been in hand  
and take the rest  
of us more casually dressed  
into an inner understand

Underwommaned not unwomanned  
mindful about being undermined  
this doughty kind  
of hussifs' passion  
for a humanity so long here out of fashion  
this quest  
to succour wounded unshod causes  
godsure-is  
a bourgeoisie's  
world best

Chivalries  
between bakings  
bring much to the makings  
of important liberties

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## LETTERS

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### Women of the cloth

*Patricia Winter, Cape Town:*

The last item in News-strip (SASH, January 1993) refers.

Please, editors or contributors, all of you so sensitive to others' feelings, may I object to your adjectives? To some of us (maybe only a few of us – maybe only me?) your language is objectionable: "the long and oppressive tradition of male priesthood" indeed! Really? Like Geoffrey Clayton? David Russell? Gonville French-Beytagh? Colin Winter in Windhoek? Trevor Huddlestone in Rosettenville? Gerard Beaumont and Robert Mercer who worked in Stellenbosch and were summarily deported for their stand for the oppressed? And probably hundreds of unknown and unsung parish priests throughout the land who have similarly spoken out all their lives against the special kind of injustice which the Black Sash has always fought against.

The contention that "the church has freed itself of its patriarchal bondage" is not really exact. The Anglican Church is a small part of the, shall we say, Catholic Church. The Roman and the Orthodox churches have made no such decision, and there is a great deal of sadness and some lack of enthusiasm about this matter within the Province of South Africa. I understand many black priests are unhappy about it, and while it remains an area of conflict I protest at SASH's quick applause. What I feel is that this very complex matter be not treated so lightly – in fact, probably not discussed at all in our magazine.

I consider myself uncertain still of an opinion in the whole matter, through my own ignorance, so please don't put me down as wildly anti-women priests. May I add that Robert Mercer, who became the Bishop of Matebeleland after his expulsion from South Africa, and who worked tirelessly for justice through those terrible years of the Rhodesian civil war, has withdrawn from the Anglican Church for this very reason, feeling so strongly against the change. He now works in Canada as an ordinary priest for a fragmented "new" church, wishing to keep the old tradition. I give this simply to underline my view that your contribu-

tor ought not to venture so – skittishly? – into this highly emotional question.

Please can't we stick to our proper business, and not start taking sides in other issues which aren't necessarily supported by all our members? I subscribe to SASH to support (however feeble my support is) the great work – and not to read of other members' views on the glories of vegetarian eating or the wickedness of vivisection. Should prostitution be legalised? Should conservationists accept tainted money? Or even, should we clap hands for women priests?

And after this terrible grouse, let me now thank you for the very well-written articles, and especially the editorials, you always publish.



### Abortion?

*Sheena Duncan, Johannesburg:*

My January 1993 SASH has just arrived and I turned first to the two articles on abortion which are most excellent as summaries of the debate on both sides. I wonder, though, whether we should try to "humanise" the debate a bit more. It is still very much at the level of middle-class women who, if they do seek an illegal abortion, probably can find a safe medical practitioner to do it.

It was Trudi Thomas who first moved me to rethink my absolutist position. She was doctor to thousands of women in the Ciskei region at the time and described the desperation of married women who were impregnated year after year at Christmas

time and just could not cope with feeding and caring for numerous children as their own health deteriorated as a consequence of a life mostly spent in a state of pregnancy.

The same desperation drives those thousands of women of all ages who seek back street abortions in South Africa at the present time. So many thousands of babies are born whose lives are brief and full of pain because their mothers are not able to care for them – even with basic food necessities. It is all very well to be pure and academic on this but we need to get the real situation across. I do not think many of the women admitted to Baragwanath each year (around 4 000) as a consequence of illegal abortions gone wrong would think much about their rights to control their own bodies. I suspect most of them do not perceive that they have any right whatsoever to refuse sexual intercourse.

The great thing about the Black Sash is that what we have said has always been based on what we have learnt from our daily dialogue with people who are in dire distress for one reason or another. We should follow that model on this issue as well. We had a small consultation in the South African Council of Churches in November 1992 of a few women in leadership positions in the church. I was unable to go but I am told it was not very successful because they adopt the position as set out by Norma Wardle and do not know about, or do not want to think about the extent of human suffering which is what this debate is really about. They adopt exactly the same strategy as those Black Sash members who ask whether this is really a Black Sash issue.

### East Cape crucible

*Bunty Biggs of Gloucester, U.K.:*

I found the January issue of SASH most interesting and valuable. What a good idea, to give prominence to a region with such insight into history, multicultural mix, development, and future hopes. I wonder if you will do this for other areas? It must mean a lot of work! □

## OBITUARIES

### Marian Lacey



**M**arian Lacey died in Grahamstown on 3 April at the age of 51, after a long struggle against illness. Her real political home was in the ANC/SACP, but she was always very supportive of the Black Sash and for periods was a member.

Marian was an inspired teacher, a good and generous friend, and a courageous activist. Much of her life was lived in the face of enormous difficulties, particularly that of constant illness. She bore physical and psychological pain with courage, and regarded the pain of others with real compassion.

Marian started her working life as a secretary to Athol Fugard at Dorkay House. After that she worked in commerce and as a high-school teacher, and gained her B.A. (Hons) *cum laude* by correspondence through UNISA. Her early political activity was as a member of the Congress of Democrats. When this organisation was banned in 1963, she joined the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party, working underground for both.

After being awarded an M.A. *cum laude* by Rhodes University, Marian won a scholarship to study at the School of African and Oriental Studies in London. On her return she worked as a researcher and trainer for, among others, the Institute of Race Relations, the Surplus People's Project and the Farm Labour Project. Her book, *Working for Boroko* (Ravan, 1981), has become the standard work on how rural labour subsidises the urban economy of South Africa. At the time of her death Marian was a lecturer at Rhodes, where her strong ideas, her encyclopaedic knowledge and her warmth and enthusiasm attracted many devoted students.

Marian served on a number of professional and research bodies, including the Association for Sociology, the Centre for Development Studies, and the Union of Democratic University Staff Association. In 1992 she did tutoring and research at St Antony's College, Oxford, focusing on the politics of alliance in South Africa.

Since the unbannings of 1990, Marian played a central role in the rebuilding of political life in the Eastern Cape, being elected onto the local and regional executives of the ANC. She also served on the ANC's National Consultative Negotiations Forum. Eastern Cape leader Govan Mbeki said after her death, "She was a great thinker, and the Eastern Cape benefited a lot from her input."

Those in the Black Sash who knew her remember Marian as one who always helped and guided others into activism. She was often three steps ahead, and often a goader, and her power of persuasion usually won the day. It was she who urged in the 1970s, when the popular progressive idea was to ignore the bantustans, that monitoring of resettlement should be done, and it was from this that the Surplus People's Project came into being. Only recently she warned that two nations were being created as money is being pushed into the Pretoria/Witwatersrand/Vereeniging area while the rural hinterland is sinking deeper into poverty.

Life was never dull with Marian around, and the Albany Black Sash gained a great deal from counting her a member. She is survived by her daughter Cara and her grandson Damian Thabo.

Lynette Paterson

(based on obituaries by Rob Berold, Don Pinnock and Rosemary Smith)

### Doreen Wyndham-Kelly



**D**oreen Wyndham-Kelly, founder member and honorary life member of Albany Black Sash, died in March this year at the age of 88.

At her funeral in the cathedral, tribute was paid to her courageous work in the Black Sash, and members of the Albany region attending the service were proud to wear their sashes in her honour. In August last year Albany held a party at which she was the guest of honour, and in retrospect we are glad that we took that opportunity to show her in how much esteem she was held. The January 1993 edition of SASH published an account of her role in the organisation.

It is difficult to single out Doreen's

greatest contribution to the Black Sash, but perhaps one of her most remarkable characteristics was her ability to be incisive and to the point. She held views that were unpopular with her generation, but always expressed them with impeccable clarity and dignity.

The citation giving Doreen life membership of Albany Black Sash graced the walls of her room in the old-age home where she lived, and now stands on the mantleshelf in the Black Sash office alongside a photograph of her. It is a privilege to have counted her as one of our founder members, and to know that she staunchly supported the beliefs and aims of the Black Sash right up to the end of her remarkable life.

Rosemary Smith

### Peggy Malherbe



**P**eggy Malherbe, a founder member of the Black Sash, died at the age of 83 on 20 December 1992 after an illness bravely borne.

We give thanks for the life of a "special person" who, by the example of the way she lived her life, gained the respect and love of many friends and associates.

The strong sense of justice given her by our father drew her into the causes which upheld and fought for these aims.

Acting as father's secretary in editing a parliamentary journal for a number of years gave her experience and an important grounding in becoming a writer of some merit.

Tolerance and consideration, criticism balanced by a dry sense of humour were attributes which stood her in good stead in her work for the organisations she supported (some of them since the early 1940s), especially: the Campaign for Right and Justice, the Black Sash, the Courtesy Campaign, the Christian Institute of Southern Africa, and the Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission. She served on pastoral and executive committees working for social justice and Christian unity.

Peggy spoke of her faith being basically the motivation for all she did.

On her 80th birthday she received an acknowledgement by Pope John

Paul of her support and work for the church.

Her wise council will be greatly missed.

Pierre, her son, wrote of his mother: "We can look back and read. We can think back and remember, and at the core of each thought is our collective memory of something different, yet of the same person – such was the depth of love and breadth of care for us all."

She would wish for a safe passage through each day.

Anne Finsen

### Beatrice Mary Trewartha

**B**. M. Trewartha, or Cuckoo, as she was known to her family and friends,



joined the Black Sash in the first months of its existence and remained a staunch member of Claremont branch, Cape Western, until her recent death in her 96th year.

Brought up on a farm in the Eastern Cape, she was fluent in Xhosa and was very concerned at the injustices being meted out to the black people.

During the sixties, many of these used to come to Eulalie Stott's home for help, where Cuckoo Trewartha went every Friday to interpret. When the Athlone Advice Office was opened on Klipfontein Road, she attended there regularly for years.

In the late sixties and seventies "surplus people", mainly women and children, were endorsed out of cities and farms, from so-called white areas and black spots, and sent to relocation settlements like Sada and Dimbaza.

Cuckoo Trewartha became involved in practical help for these poor people. Through correspondence with a Xhosa woman from Dimbaza named Jane, she collected clothes and blankets and sent parcels for distribution. This went on for several years until Cuckoo could no longer cope with the work, and things had improved at Dimbaza.

Her interest in Black Sash doings and policy remained active until her 90th birthday when her memory began to fail. She was always a generous giver for Morning Market and Black Sash funds.

We remember her with love, respect and gratitude.

Bunty Aitchison

### Hildegarde Spottiswoode

**H**ildegarde (Bunny) Spottiswoode lived



on her farm near Stellenbosch for many years and died there on 30 April 1993. Her mother's maiden name was Van der Poel, and her father was Professor Morrison of Stellenbosch University.

A stable, calm personality, with a keen sense of humour, a keen intellect, she had a beneficial influence on the predominantly English-speaking members of the Black Sash in the Cape in their attitude towards Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. She was the most fair-minded of women, open to discussion when opinions differed.

In 1960 *South Africa – The road ahead* (a book of 18 essays by prominent South African leaders, holding widely different views), compiled by Bunny, was published. It was said that this was a political book with a difference: "Too seldom do South Africans consider their opponents' view points; they listen avidly to those who think as they do and discount entirely the words of those who differ. This book aims to bridge the gap." At the end of her introduction to the book, Bunny herself emphasised "the pressing need for all people in South Africa to cooperate in seeking a solution of our racial difficulties, so that we may travel the road ahead in harmony and not in strife."

Bunny obtained an M.Sc. (Pure Mathematics) at Stellenbosch University, followed by a Secondary Teacher's Certificate at the University of Cape Town. She then studied Applied Statistics at University College, London.

She married Hugh, a colonial administrator in Nigeria. Their children were not permitted to live there, so Bunny travelled between Stellenbosch and Nigeria, spending time with her mother and four sons, and with Hugh.

She was elected to the regional council of the Black Sash Cape Western region in 1957 and became national vice-president in 1959. She was a Progressive Federal Party candidate in Stellenbosch in the 1966 election.

Hugh died in 1961, and Bunny is survived by three of her four sons. It is good to have in remembrance all that she was and did.

Evelyn West

## NEWS-STRIP

### Northern Transvaal

#### Voter education

Some of Northern Transvaal's members recently armed themselves with *You and the Vote* and took to the streets of Pretoria. The groups met with mixed reactions, and what follows is the heart-warming experience of Ruth Meyer and Kerry Harris.

Saturday, 28 November 1992, saw the two of us getting out of our car and walking apprehensively towards some commuters and vegetable vendors at the central station. As we engaged the first people coming through the turnstiles, the vendors looked on in amusement. "Is die boeke vir die Here?" No, we replied, holding on to our "Vote, vote, vote" and "Your need to vote" posters.

The longer we spoke about the need for identification documentation and the kind of procedure involved in the voting process, the more interest the vendors took in our attempts to engage people. Within minutes they asked if they could assist us in arresting people's attention. What began as a fairly tentative attempt to captivate people became a veritable feast of interaction.

Someone led us through the turnstile, along dark and hostile passages to a platform, and on to a bench where some Pied Piper was gathering people to listen to our speech.

Many people took books to hand on to others, and assured us they would pass them around the train/bus/taxi where we had been conversing. Later, we were asked to leave booklets at the nearby Azapo office, and many made us promise to return as soon as we had secured more books.

The moral of our story is that a couple of hours on a Saturday morning will go a long way towards promoting discussion among those who are thirsty to know. The need is greater than the availability of people concerned enough to engage in election and voter education.

Kerry Harris

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## NEWS-STRIP

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1992 Albany co-chairs, Rosemary Smith and Hilary Southall, with Xoliswa Tom of the Border council of churches

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### Albany

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#### Speaker from war-torn Ciskei

In October 1992, the Albany Black Sash was addressed by Xoliswa Tom of the Border council of churches. She talked about the appalling level to which daily existence had sunk in Ciskei following the Bisho massacre. Fieldworker Glenn Hollands had been monitoring events on the ground, and reported that ongoing clashes between Oupa Gqozo's African Democratic Movement (ADM) and the African National Congress (ANC) had led to widespread violence and civil turmoil.

Tom described a nation in which brother was being divided against brother, and father against son; in which schooling had come to a standstill and children were becoming hardened; in which normal social activities like taking children to visit relatives were just not happening. "The pleasure of being young is unknown," she said. "They learn war tactics and their minds are becoming distorted! In Ciskei we begin each day in gratitude to God that we are still alive, our homes are still intact and the light is coming through the curtains. At the end of the day we thank God for sparing us. People just wait for their hour or their minute of death. The

people of Ciskei are wearing a shoe which is pressing the corn," she said, "and the shoe is Gqozo."

Tom warned, however, that it would be a mistake to blame Gqozo alone. The South African government, she pointed out, was nurturing an alliance between those leaders "who feared democracy", and this was strengthening Gqozo's arm.

Hope for Ciskei, Tom said, lay in empowering women to challenge the *status quo*. "Women must speak out for justice and peace," she said; "women must influence husbands and government; women must educate the children, and rescue their imprisoned minds. Women must keep up to date. If we don't, then our place is in the kitchen!"

Mainstream press reports coming out of Ciskei at this time were based very largely on South African police and South African Defense Force statements, and it was a deep concern of the three Eastern Cape regions of the Black Sash that little attention was being paid to events in the homeland. People inside Ciskei were feeling the same! "The invitation to speak to you is a sacrament of hope for us," Tom said.

*Lynette Paterson*

### Natal Midlands

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#### Hosting conference

Organising national conference resulted in a series of exciting and positive experiences for the region. Some we expected: the characteristic warmth and dynamism of the people in our organisation and the renewed energy and commitment that always seems to go with that, was as strong as ever. We thank everyone who contributed towards making it such a rejuvenating time.

We had also expected the conference to be hard work and were somewhat anxious about our ability to undertake such an enormous task. What was unexpected was the extent to which members of our region, some of whom had not been particularly active in the Black Sash recently, offered assistance in a whole host of different ways. Not only did this make the organisation far less of a burden for some, but it provided the vehicle for a new sense of cohesion and commitment from far more people in the Midlands. In a small region like ours, this is a much appreciated bonus.

#### Gender portfolio

Of all the crucial issues debated at national conference, the most exciting (and daunting) for us was our new responsibility for the gender portfolio. Discussions about the full implications of this are well underway and we have contacted all regions requesting their expectations of us so that we can plan with the broad context firmly in mind. We would welcome suggestions and comments at any time and look forward to frequent communication, especially with women's groups, during the course of this year.

*Jenny Clarence*

### Cape Eastern

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#### Award for Judy Chalmers

The Rotary Club of Port Elizabeth West presented Judy Chalmers with the Paul Harris award for her services to the community in the field of human rights, specifically through her work in the Black Sash advice office.

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## NEWS-STRIP

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### Natal Coastal

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#### March for Chris Hani

Natal Coastal mourns the untimely death of Chris Hani, brutally slain by reactive forces and the heinous system that spawned them.

Our recognition of the stature of the man, born Martin Thembisile Hani, arises from an understanding of what he meant to the people from whence he came and to whom he dedicated his life: the marginalised of our country – those of whom, in her address to our 1992 national conference, Sheena Duncan so poignantly reminded us.

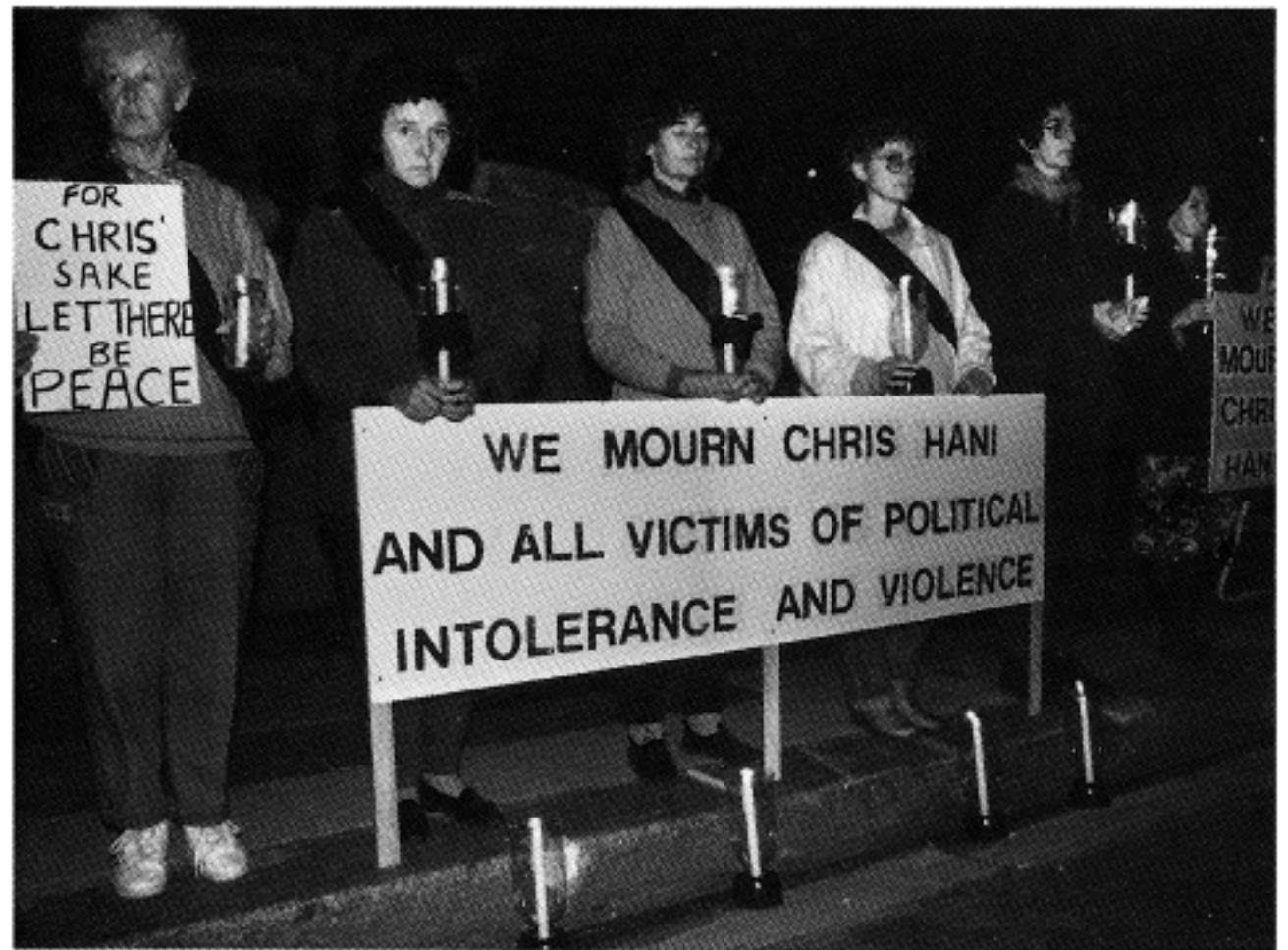
As a tangible expression of our feelings, Natal Coastal joined with about 100 000 mourners from in and around Durban. The march, as befitted the occasion, was serious and dignified. And, given the justifiable anger, shock and grief experienced, the marchers were remarkably disciplined. A few racial instances were recorded, provoked, for the most part, by the all too familiar gestures and acts of insensitive white racists. Commendable also was the restraint of the police, save perhaps for one minor show of force.

#### Honorary memberships

In recognition of the long-standing, patient, dedicated and invaluable service rendered, Natal Coastal region offered Eleanor Mathews and Ken Burns honorary membership. A founder member of our Highway branch, Mathews' commitment to the Black Sash, expressed in the manifold practical ways on which we all came to depend so hugely, never once, throughout the vicissitudes of these past difficult decades, faltered. In March 1993, Eleanor left to live near her son in England.

Ken's contributions, too, have largely gone unsung, but year-in, year-out Ken has gratuitously audited the region's books, and his honorary membership therefore also comes as a small token of our immense gratitude.

Ann Colvin □



The Black Sash National Executive and Cape Western members held a pre-dawn candlelight vigil on Monday, 19 April 1993, outside the Cape Town City Hall from 06:00 to 08:00. We were mourning the tragic loss of Chris Hani as well as the many other deaths which have occurred as a consequence of political intolerance and violence. Citizens were invited to come and stand with us as a symbol of commitment to peace and justice, and to work towards building a common society free of acts of destruction.

Black Sash members participated in a gathering of concerned Port Elizabeth citizens deploring the assassination of Chris Hani. As Port Elizabeth is a declared unrest area, a march was called off, but the group presented letters to the community, the church and the police expressing shock and calling on the police to spare no effort in solving the murder of Chris Hani.



# The Black Sash

## Women for human rights

**O**UR VISION is a South Africa in which human rights are recognised in law and respected in practice, and in which the government is accountable to all its people and attends to their basic needs.

**O**UR BELIEF is that through individual and collective non-violent action people have the power to change society.

**O**UR AIMS are to promote

- the constitutional entrenchment and protection by law of human rights for all;
- equal access to justice for all;
- the establishment of democratic and accountable government;
- an awareness of the roles of civil society as well as the state in the achievement of social and economic justice.

**O**UR IMMEDIATE GOALS are

- to monitor infringements of political and socio-economic rights;
- in all our work to monitor how the rights of women are affected;
- to engage in para-legal work which strengthens people's capacity to understand and claim their rights;
- to campaign for justice in legislation and state administration;
- to research and debate human rights;
- to develop those membership and staff capacities necessary to fulfil our aims.